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Careers in the Arts:
Who Stays and Who Leaves?

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Executive Summary

Arts school executives and faculty face the daunting, zero-sum challenge of packing more and better preparation into over-taxed academic calendars and saturated students: major requirements in a bachelor's or graduate degree track; professional and vocational preparation; internships; a liberal arts core curriculum; and second majors and minors, without neglecting the ever important extra-curricular activities that seem increasingly "co-curricular" and career-essential.

How best to balance in the curriculum preparation for specialized, skill-heavy careers in highly competitive arts professions with the sort of educational preparation characteristic of a liberal arts curriculum that promises to prepare students for flexible, self-directed, adaptable career paths with the multiple episodes and pivots that have become so commonplace for this generation? What is most "foundational" in an undergraduate education in the arts and what skills and knowledge should be deferred to advanced study or the lessons of working life?

Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) survey data provide abundant insights into this perennial dilemma of curriculum design. While this SNAAP Special Report does not address all of these questions, it sheds light on an important yet understudied question related to the challenge of preparing students for an artistic career:

How do experiences during the postsecondary education of arts alumni combine with their early experiences working in arts-related industries to shape whether these graduates ***leave*** *or* ***stay*** *in a career devoted to artistic work?*

What can SNAAP data tell us about which students are more likely to sustain careers in the arts? Which early-career experiences or influences tend to discourage graduates from continuing work in arts-related employment? Can knowing these factors help higher education institutions better prepare students and graduates to persist and flourish in pursuing their ambitions in the arts?

SNAAP survey data have long and persistently revealed that arts school graduates are dissatisfied with their entrepreneurial, business, and financial preparation while in school. Specifically, respondents wish that their alma maters had taught them about the practical aspects of their work, including how to network and promote themselves, how to handle debt and budgets, how to manage the business concerns associated with their particular arts-based work, how to be entrepreneurial, and how to find jobs. Curiously, SNAAP data also reveal what a high value arts school graduates put on the liberal arts aspects of their education. They do not seem to be requesting a highly specialized or narrowly vocational education.

This report shows that a graduate's major can have a substantial influence on who stays professionally in the arts and who goes. For instance, majoring in architecture or design increases the odds of being a "stayer" (versus a "leaver") while arts alumni majoring in art history and several other majors are less likely to stay after ever having worked in the arts. Other majors have no statistically significant impact on whether alumni remain in arts-based careers or leave them.

Beyond major, other significant predictors of who stays and who leaves include timely completion of degree, the securing of advanced degrees, as well as the pursuit of personal connections and internships.

SNAAP survey data reveal considerable demographic inequalities among arts school students – during school and well after graduation – particularly by race/ethnicity and gender. Controlling for all other factors, the odds of women alumni staying in arts-related occupations (after entering a career in the arts) are lower compared to men, and the odds of people of color staying are lower when compared to white alumni. In addition, alumni with large amounts of student debt (over $50,000) are significantly more likely to leave the arts than individuals who report lower levels of debt.

Finally, our research reveals a new class of arts school graduates: "the generalists." SNAAP survey data have long confirmed the intuition that double majors combining a major in the arts with one *outside* the arts are less likely to stay in the arts as a career, compared to respondents with only a single arts major. However, much less intuitively, compared to arts-based workers who are more prone to specialization, graduates who expand the number of artistic occupations in which they have worked (what we call "generalists") are much more likely to stay in the arts.

This report focuses on the experiences of a subset of survey respondents ($N = 52{,}315$) who are 30 years of age and older, who ever worked in an arts-related occupation, and who are still active in the labor force. We use logistic regression to discern how a range of factors combine to shape the likelihood that respondents stay in arts-based careers rather than leave them, namely: inequality stemming from gender, race, and class background; the formative impact of the higher education experience (including curricular and co-curricular aspects of that experience, such as completing a particular arts major); and the skills and experiences acquired after graduation. We also focus on two open-ended items in which over 50,000 respondents detail what their respective alma mater did well and could have done better in equipping them for an arts-based career. While some critics question the value of an arts school education, our findings reveal that certain activities undertaken during higher education (e.g., building social networks and undertaking arts-based internships) have long-lasting effects on careers.

Introduction: Higher Education and Artistic Careers

Speaking to workers at a General Electric manufacturing plant in Waukesha, Wisconsin in 2014, President Barack Obama made the case for technical training as a pathway to viable careers, despite concerns from worried parents: "A lot of parents, unfortunately, maybe when they saw a lot of manufacturing being offshored, told their kids you don't want to go into the trades, you don't want to go into manufacturing because you'll lose your job." He specified that a four-year college degree is not necessary to make an honorable living, adding: "folks can make a lot more potentially with skilled manufacturing or the trades than they might with an art history degree" (Obama, 2014). While he promptly added, "Nothing wrong with an art history degree – I love art history. So I don't want to get a bunch of emails from everybody," he nevertheless received several emails in response. Obama later apologized for the "glib remark" and clarified to one art historian that he simply meant to highlight the promise of technical training and related career paths (Mueller, 2014), but his comment fueled ongoing debates regarding the so-called "return on investment" of some degrees over others and served as yet another provocation for arts education advocates.

President Obama's comments not only fueled debate, they also resonated with existing concerns in the broader discussion around the value of higher education, in general, and the value of advanced arts education, in particular. Regarding higher education in general, some question its continued utility and relevance in terms of preparing students for work and employment in the 21st century – particularly that type of higher education provided by a "liberal arts" curriculum that exposes students to a wide array of knowledge and topics rather than a curriculum tightly focused on occupational training (see McMillan Cottom, 2017; Noble Jones & Heard, 2018). To be sure, young prospective workers (and their parents) are right to worry about educational decisions and career possibilities. The year after Obama's triumphant celebration of manufacturing careers in Waukesha, General Electric announced plans to close its plant in that very community and move those 350 jobs to Canada (Lohr, 2015). What occurred in Waukesha is part of a larger pattern that has been unfolding for decades – a pattern that involves the disappearance and relocation of full-time jobs in manufacturing and other sectors (Barley, Bechky & Milliken, 2017; Bluestone & Harrison, 1982). Since the 1970s, the world of work has also become increasingly precarious due to the considerable rise in part-time and temporary jobs, which offer few worker benefits and no job security (Kalleberg, 2009, 2011). While young workers in recent years are increasingly considered "at-risk" in their school-to-work transition if they lack a college degree, amidst these long-term and tumultuous shifts in employment, a growing body of research documents career pathways of college graduates that are often delayed, adrift, and unequal (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013; Arum & Roksa, 2014). In other words, some benefit more from their college education than do others (see also Rivera, 2015). This disparity in the "return on investment" has become even more pressing given the rising cost of tuition for higher education and growing alarm over student debt that many compile while pursuing higher education (Frenette & Tepper, 2016; Jackson & Reynolds, 2013; McMillan Cottom, 2017). Despite such concerns about higher education in general, it is difficult to dispute the payoffs of college education for most students. When assessing such outcomes as income, job satisfaction, and employment

status, young adults with college degrees fare much better, on average, than do individuals without those degrees (Taylor, Fry & Oates, 2014). Furthermore, amidst the major shifts in work and jobs occurring since the 1970s, there has been both an increasing demand on the part of employers for the analytical skills associated with liberal arts training – such as the abilities to think critically and deductively, to gather and synthesize information, and to devise solutions to problems – as well as heightened earnings for individuals that possess those skills (Liu & Grusky, 2013). These payoffs bode well for the growing number of people who now seek to benefit from a college education. As of 2013, more than one third of 25- to 32-year-olds in the United States have a college degree, up from an average of one in four within that age group over previous decades (24% in 1979 and 25% in 1995; Taylor, Fry & Oates, 2014). Clearly, then, higher education still holds an attraction for a sizable number of people, regardless of the debate swirling around it.

The general debate about the relevance of higher education is mirrored by a similar debate regarding arts education that occurs in conservatories, colleges, and universities across the nation. There is some question about the *necessity* of arts education: certain studies find, for instance, that arts education has no impact or a very small impact upon the earnings that flow from artistic work. This suggests that artists who are self-taught may earn just as much as those artists educated at conservatories, colleges, and universities (BFAMFAPhD, 2014; Rengers, 2002; Towse, 2006). There is also some question about the *dividends* that arts education offers: those who major in the arts tend to earn less income than those who major in other fields (Abreu et al., 2012). Of course, this assumes that such individuals actually attain an arts-related job, for long-term and stable forms of employment can sometimes be elusive in the arts (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Frenette & Tepper, 2016; Menger, 1999, 2014).

These questions about arts education are well founded, but they do not provide a complete picture. Regarding the necessity of arts education, work in artistic careers has a notable divide between those jobs requiring academic credentials and those that do not. Academic credentials are not needed for someone to claim the honorific title of "artist" or "creator" (Becker, 2017; Fine, 2017). However, there are some occupations within arts-related industries where arts education at conservatories, colleges or universities is expected, if not required, for employment – with architects and orchestral musicians being among those examples (see Blau, 1984; Murninghan & Conlan, 1991; Ravet, 2015; Sarfatti Larson, 1993). The variable nature of credentials in artistic careers may partly result from the relatively late emergence of curricular programs available for interested individuals. Colleges and universities in the US did not regularly feature music and the visual arts in the curriculum until after the 1920s (DiMaggio, 1991a, 1991b; Dowd et al., 2002). In 1960, when the College Art Association approved the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) rather than the PhD as the terminal degree for studio artists, there were 72 MFA programs in existence (Fine, 2017; Singerman, 1999). Today, there are 568 such accredited programs in the fine or literary arts, of which half were founded in the last three decades (Gerber & Childress, 2017). Yet, the recent ascent of educational credentials in some careers (e.g., Bachelor's Degree in Music Business) has been accompanied by a cultural lag in acknowledging the value of such credentials (Frenette, 2013).

Regarding the dividends of arts education, those majoring in the arts may indeed earn relatively lower salaries following graduation than do non-arts majors; however, those working in the arts are also more likely to be satisfied with work than are other professionals – with some in arts-related industries even stressing that they have a "calling" to engage in such work (Bille et al., 2013; Dumford & Miller, 2017; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Steiner & Schneider, 2013). Meanwhile, those artistic workers with higher levels of education tend to be better positioned in a number of ways (including earnings) than are artistic workers with less education (Anheir, Gerhards & Romo, 1995; Bille & Jensen, 2018; Woronkowicz, 2015). As Gary Fine (2017, p. 1468) aptly summarizes for the visual arts, "Whether required, having a degree matters…" when considering both the cachet and opportunities that flow to those artists with an MFA (see also Giuffre, 2009). The degree likewise matters for jazz musicians but is not required: those with advanced degrees are prominently located in their field of jazz – combining

their academic credentials with higher pay, critical recognition, and numerous connections to their jazz peers (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013; Pinheiro & Dowd, 2009). Not surprisingly, then, the number of arts education students and alumni has grown in recent years and decades (Fine, 2017; Gerber & Childress, 2017; McRobbie, 2016).

We do not attempt to resolve the debate surrounding arts education in this report. Instead, we attempt to shed some light on an important yet understudied question:

How do experiences during the postsecondary education of arts alumni combine with their early experiences working in arts-related industries to shape whether these graduates ***leave*** *or* ***stay*** *in a career devoted to artistic work?*

Contributors to scholarship on arts alumni have focused mostly on the "front end" of these arts-based careers – such as the difficulties that arts alumni face in establishing a career in arts-related industries shortly after college graduation (Comunian, Faggian & Li, 2010; Fine, 2017; Martin & Frenette, 2017). We complement those efforts by focusing on the careers of arts alumni with a long-term perspective, thereby capturing more the "middle" and the "back-end" of these careers.

While we discuss in detail the results of our study below, we highlight here a central finding: **the higher education experiences of arts alumni have a long and lasting impact on their respective careers in arts-related occupations**. A number of studies find that, given the numerous challenges associated with careers in the arts (e.g., scarce opportunities for full-time employment, an abundance of temporary jobs, and a surplus of would-be artists who can drive down wages for all; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Menger, 2014), it is not unusual for creative workers to "give up" on their dreams and aspirations for a career in the arts and seek more stable employment elsewhere (Bille & Jensen, 2018; Frenette, 2016; Mayer, 2016; Ursell, 2000). Indeed, in our own study, we find a number of individuals leave their employment in arts-related industries. Yet, we also find that some alumni have drawn deeply on opportunities afforded in their arts education and, in turn, are much more likely to stay in arts-related careers. Hence, by heeding those who **stay** and those who **leave** arts-based careers, we introduce an important new element to the debate regarding the importance of arts education for careers and employment.

The Nature of Arts-Related Work and the Challenges of Data for Assessing Such Work

We focus broadly in this report on work and careers in "artistic" domains – including the performing arts, the visual arts, the literary arts, design, arts education, and arts administration. Some may find this broad approach confusing: after all, there are substantial differences between, say, the production of ballet, sculpture, poetry, or a building. Yet, there are several reasons that importantly support such a broad approach to the "arts" and the work and careers that stem from them. First, while dealing with a huge variety of content, all arts-related careers involve at their core the production of aesthetic works that are distinctive in some fashion, with that distinctiveness protected and enforced by professional norms and intellectual property laws (Becker, 1982; Bille, 2012; Mathieu, 2012; Reilly, 2018; Skaggs, 2019). Furthermore, that commonality even applies to the production of content meant to be transcendent and enduring (i.e., "high culture") and content that is meant to be entertaining if not fleeting (i.e., "popular culture;" DiMaggio, 2006; Dowd, 2011). Second, arts-related work is fundamentally a collective effort (Becker, 1982; DiMaggio, 1992; Uzzi & Spiro, 2005). Despite the myth of the "isolated creator," most arts-related production involves not only those who do the creative work, but also the administrative and support personnel who are integral to the collective effort (such as publicists and stage managers for Broadway musicals). Finally, it makes sense to consider the arts in a broad fashion because there is growing recognition that the careers of many artistic workers involve participation in multiple disciplines (e.g., music and film), working in arts and non-arts industries (e.g., graphic design for a design agency vs. graphic design for a banking conglomerate), and spanning several sectors and roles (e.g., deploying creative skills in addressing community development

challenges; see Cornfield, 2015; Frenette, 2017; Frenette et al., 2018; Janssen, 1998; Koppman, 2014; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Hollister, 2003).

In taking this broad approach to the arts and arts-based careers, we nonetheless are mindful of marked divisions that occur within the arts, of which we mention two. First, work in creative careers has long been divided between, on the one hand, long-term employment within a given organization and, on the other hand, temporary employment across a succession of jobs (Menger, 1999, 2014). The former is marked by relative stability in terms of daily work, whereas the latter is marked by an almost continual concern with securing the next job before the current job is completed. While this division between the two types of employment is longstanding, certain creative fields (e.g., film and music) have experienced a notable increase in the preponderance of the more precarious type (Bechky, 2006; Cornfield, 2015; Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Skaggs, 2018).

The second divide that marks arts-based employment is the one between the exceedingly large numbers of individuals who aspire to have an artistic career versus the small number of individuals who actually do (Menger, 1999, 2014). This oversupply of would-be creative workers creates logjams at points of career entry as well as subsequent points of career advancement – logjams that only a fortunate few successfully navigate (Alper & Wassall, 2006; Craig & Dubois, 2010; Dowd & Kelly, 2012). Indeed, it is commonplace to speak of the "superstar effect" given how especially great success in artistic careers is enjoyed only by a small number (Bille & Jensen, 2018). In his classic study of one arts-related occupation, for instance, sociologist Robert Faulkner (1983) differentiates between the periphery, middle, and inner circles among Hollywood soundtrack composers to highlight stark differences in status and career mobility: he finds that 252 composers had only one film credit (periphery), 150 had two to six credits (middle), and approximately 40 had produced between 7 and 50 scores (inner circle). Faulkner (1983, p. 101) asserts that transitioning from the "middle" to the "inner" circles is akin to "jungle warfare" and as such "is no easier than breaking into the business originally." We suspect that the divide between those who have employment versus those who seek such employment is especially pronounced in arts-related occupations that do not require educational credentials because such occupations have low entry barriers for would-be artistic workers (see Menger, 2009, 2014).

SNAAP Alumni and Their Career Pathways in the Arts

We draw upon data from the 2011, 2012, and 2013 administrations of the SNAAP survey. Respondents in 2011-2013 answered questions, among other things, about their earlier experiences in higher education, their first and other jobs following graduation from an institution of higher education, and their current jobs. From these kinds of questions we generate results to give insight into our key questions: Who stays, and who leaves? Figure 1 shows how we use the SNAAP survey to delineate between those who **stay** in a career and those who **leave** a career in the arts (broadly construed—artists, support personnel, educators, etc.). We do so by targeting three points in the career trajectories of arts alumni. All of our 76,909 respondents began their respective trajectories (i.e., the first point) by intently engaging in the arts during higher education – such as majoring in the arts while pursuing a bachelor's degree or such as concentrating on the arts during graduate education while completing, say, an MFA or PhD program. That time in higher education is depicted in the circle on the left side of Figure 1.

Given our interests in career trajectories, we turn to a subset of survey respondents who are 30 years of age and older and are still active in the labor force. Those who are at least 30 years old at the time of taking the survey have likely had sufficient time to establish a work-history and career; those who are active in the labor force (unlike retirees) are still compiling a work-history / career, possibly an arts-related one. This subset thus allows us to get at the second point in a particular career trajectory: those 52,315 individuals who completed their arts education and, at least,

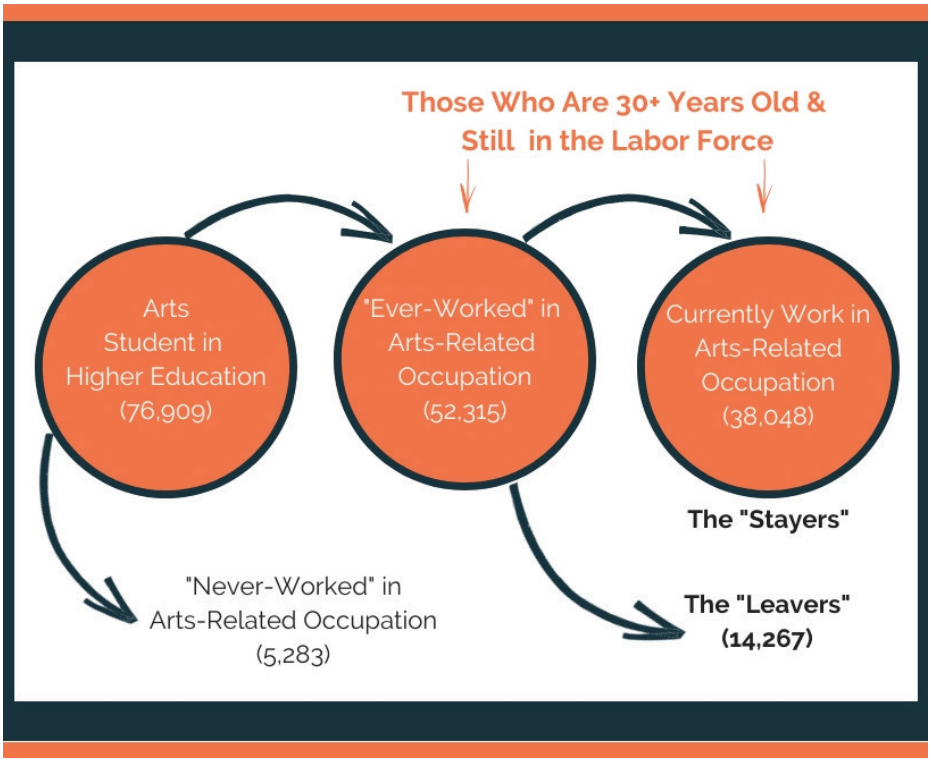


FIGURE 1: Conceptualizing Career Trajectories in the Arts with SNAAP Data

several years later have "**ever-had" a job in an arts-related occupation** – as depicted in the middle circle of Figure 1.

Why the difference between the 76,909 for the full survey and the 52,315 for the subset? As already mentioned, some of the respondents are either too young for our criteria or have left the labor force and, hence, are done with careers in the formal sense (19,311 respondents).[2] Yet, the bottom of Figure 1 also points out those 5,283 respondents whose trajectories have taken them *away* from an arts-based career (rather than simply being too young or done). Although the SNAAP survey questions do not allow us to discern the detailed motivations for all those not pursuing and securing arts-based work, we do know that 12,452 respondents reported that, when entering higher education, they had no intention of ever working as an "artist" narrowly defined (versus the broad notion that we use here, where ours includes support personnel who work in the arts but do not claim the mantle of "artist").[3] Yet, as commonly observed, higher education sometimes has a way of changing initial work intentions. Frenette and Tepper (2016) find that, among arts alumni who did not foresee themselves as pursuing an artist career, some 43% would eventually do so. That gives some clarification as to why around 12,000 respondents did not initially want to be artists whereas only around 5,200 would never go on to pursue arts-based work.

The focus in this report is on the third point in the trajectories of those who have ever worked in the arts. In particular, we are keenly interested in accounting for why 38,048 of those respondents are still engaged in such work in the present versus why more than a quarter of those who have ever-worked in the arts (14,267 out of 52,315) have since taken a trajectory away from arts-related occupations. Thus, like Daniel Cornfield (2015) and others (e.g., Faulkner, 1983; de Laat, 2015) who have investigated the career trajectories of arts-related workers in a qualitative fashion, we are able to assess factors that explain the

2 There are 18,861 respondents who are less than 30 years of age and 2,297 who report being retired (a total of 21,158). These numbers do not add to the 19,311 reported above because some respondents are both older than 30 and retired.

3 Working in the arts, even arguably as an artist in the narrow sense, does not mean that individuals will automatically claim the title of "artist." This is a point that Lena and Lindemann (2014) address in detail by way of other SNAAP data.

divergence of these latter two career trajectories (what Cornfield calls "pathways"). We add to such qualitative studies by quantitatively discerning, via statistical analysis, how a range of factors combine to shape the likelihood that respondents stay in arts-based careers rather than leave them.

As is common in large-scale surveys, the SNAAP survey relies upon questions with pre-specified answers, from which respondents choose those that apply to them. Yet, for a number of topics, the SNAAP survey *also* asked respondents to address a particular question in their own words. We focus in this report on two open-ended items in which respondents detail what their alumni institution did well and did *not* do well in equipping them for an arts-based career. Given that each of these open-ended questions generated more than 50,000 answers from survey respondents, we rely on rudimentary techniques from what is known as "computational linguistics" (which we also explain below), not only to make our way through the wealth of words found in those open-ended responses, but additionally to make sense of underlying patterns found in the respondents' own words. Qualitative studies have admirably plumbed the difficulties that art students face as they transition to the workplace by way of interviews and observation. We add to those efforts here by detailing concerns that especially matter for tens of thousands of arts alumni.

SNAAP Data: Arts Alumni Who Ever-Worked in an Arts-Related Occupation

Table 1 indicates the expansiveness of the term "arts alumni" by summarizing the broad categories of majors / concentrations completed by the SNAAP survey respondents who have ever-worked in an arts-related occupation. We are particularly interested in the architecture major (or concentration), as its curricular programs tend to be highly formalized and closely connected to future work opportunities; for example, architectural internships are a key component in the professionalization process, as well as in the attainment of educational credentials required of architects (Quinn, 2003). We thus expect a relatively tighter link between completion of a degree in this

TABLE 1: Number of Arts Alumni, by Majors/ Concentrations, Who "Ever-Had" Arts-Based Work

MAJOR	N
Architecture	3,532
Art History	1,993
Arts Administration & Management	532
Arts Education	4,473
Dance	7,758
Design	7,628
Fine Arts	15,766
Media Arts	5,528
Music Performance	6,986
Music History	1,234
Theater	4,952
Writing	932
Other	732
Total	**62,046**

major and arts-based work for architecture majors than for the other majors in Table 1. Note that the total number of majors in Table 1 is larger than the group of "ever-worked" that we are studying (62,046 vs. 52,315). That is because these arts alumni could major / concentrate in more than one area. We return to that point below and in the statistical analysis.

There are 23 arts-related occupations in which 68% of our SNAAP survey respondents ever worked (see Figure 1). As we will show in the analysis, the largest groups of occupations do not necessarily denote those with the most success in terms of staying. The occupations listed below in Table 2 likewise encompass the full gamut of the performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, design, and education / administration. As is the case with the majors / concentrations listed in Table 1, many respondents have engaged in more than one of the arts-related occupations listed in Table 2 below. That is a point to which we will also return below, as well as in the logistic regression analysis.

The question remains, though: **for all those who ever embarked upon this arts-based employment, what factors allow some to remain in that work while others exit, turning to work outside of the arts?**

TABLE 2: Arts-Related Occupations in which Arts Alumni Have "Ever-Worked"

OCCUPATION	N
Architect	4,255
Arts Administrator or Manager	9,406
Museum or Gallery Worker/Curator	6,806
Graphic Designer, Illustrator, or Art Director	14,359
Interior Designer	3,286
Web Designer	6,476
Other Designer	5,250
Higher Education Arts Educator	13,168
K-12 Arts Educator	11,363
Private Teacher of the Arts	11,904
Other Arts Educator	4,848
Craft Artist	5,726
Fine Artist	11,043
Film, TV, Video Artist	6,494
Multi-Media Artist or Animator	3,440
Photographer	7,214
Actor	5,011
Dancer or Choreographer	2,527
Engineer or Technician (Sound, Light, Other)	2,306
Musician	11,098
Theater Stage Director, Producer	4,048
Writer, Author, or Editor	11,270
Other Arts Occupation	7,106
Total	**168,404**

We divide findings into three sections of analysis to bring insight to the question of who stays and who leaves. The first section of results stresses the inequality stemming from gender, race, and class that marks society as a whole, including the workplace and those within it. The second set of findings examines the formative impact of the higher education experience, with an eye toward both the curricular and co-curricular aspects of that experience that potentially help alumni to succeed in later life. The third set of findings investigates precarious work conditions that are commonplace in arts-based occupations – where skills learned in the "real world" help some succeed while others around them falter.

Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Class

When investigating differential success in the many realms of society, including but not limited to employment and careers, social scientists often emphasize the impact that gender, race, and class play in that success or the lack thereof (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Harvey Wingfield & Taylor, 2016). Consideration of those three attributes likewise matters in terms of how they shape the types of trajectories that artistic workers follow. In a number of arts-based settings, but not all of those settings, women and people of color have historically faced barriers that their male and white counterparts have not faced and, in turn, they have tended to secure less success in terms of opportunities and recognition (see Bledsoe, 2017; Braden, 2009; Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015; Corse & Griffin, 1997; Dowd & Blyler, 2002; Dowd, Liddle & Blyler, 2005). Meanwhile, certain scholars argue that, due to larger systems of class inequality, the higher education environment tends to favor those from higher rather than lower social class backgrounds – whereby more affluent students are comfortable in navigating the "culture" of the campus, and more affluent students are adept at translating their class advantages into occupational ones, such as securing higher relative pay (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013; Kane, 2011; Rivera, 2015; Witteveen & Attewell, 2017). Relatedly, some argue that those individuals whose parent were active in arts-related work will likewise enjoy advantages (such as higher pay) when they themselves enter arts-related industries (O'Brien et al., 2016; see also Negus, 2002).

We thus consider how these fundamental attributes predict the trajectories of those who stay in arts-related occupations and those who leave. Table 3 lists the distribution of these attributes across the SNAAP respondents who ever-worked in arts-related occupations: it reveals that, in terms of sheer numbers, women (56%), whites (81%) and the relatively affluent (80%) predominate in this group. Three points bear mentioning. While the SNAAP survey gathered information on transgender individuals, these individuals are not numerous enough to be included in the logistic regressions that we describe below. Second, among our respondents, those who make no claims constitute the second largest racial/ethnic group. This non-response is undoubtedly partly due to the race-ethnicity question being near the end of the survey, but

TABLE 3: Demographic Characteristics of Those Who Stay/Leave Subsample

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	%
Gender	
Female	55.7%
Male	38.9%
Transgender	0.1%
Race/Ethnicity	
White (including White Hispanic, Latino, Spanish)	81.2%
Black or African American	2.6%
Asian	3.4%
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish Origin (non-white)	3.8%
*Other & Multi-Racial**	4.2%
No Race/Ethnicity Claimed	4.5%
Class	
First-Generation Student	19.9%
Parent(s) Were/Are Artists	20.0%

* "Other & Muti-Racial" combines the following race/ethnicity responses: "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander," "Other," and any combination of two or more responses except "White" and "Hispanic, Latino, Spanish Origin."

we report those who did *not* answer the race-ethnicity questions in case such individuals comprise a non-random group that could compromise our multivariate analysis; for example, they would be a non-random group if a sizable number of white individuals are the ones not claiming any racial-ethnic category (Alexander, 2018).[4] Finally, we gauge affluence or social class background with the variables that are available in the survey: one of these is consistent with the approach of O'Brien and colleagues (2016), assessing whether a respondent's parents or guardians are also artists; the other is consistent with Wilbur and Roscigno's (2016) approach of assessing class background by comparing those college students (in our case, alumni) whose previous generations of family members did not attend college to those continuing a family tradition of college matriculation – with that comparison tapping distinctive challenges that the former face when making sense of the collegiate experience. Both social-class predictors, status as a first generation student and being the child of an artist, tap similarly sized groups of survey respondents (around 20%). That said, we should acknowledge that in the grander scheme of things, the respondents featured in this study are relatively well-resourced; they have benefitted from the esteem accorded their college degrees when seeking employment and when competing for jobs against those without degrees (see Fine, 2017; Frenette & Tepper, 2016; Martin & Frenette, 2017).[5] Nonetheless, the implications of these findings should be stressed: it holds that the divergent trajectories of stayers and leavers likely reflect the larger system of inequality that places barriers for certain groups – namely, women, people of color, and the less affluent.

Curricular and Co-curricular Experiences

The second set of findings brings the focus from society as a whole to the higher education campus. Indeed, when assessing success in labor markets and employment outcomes, a number of sociologists hone in on aspects of the higher education experience so as to explain differential patterns of success. What we now stress is not the social class-based aspect of this experience but, instead, the components of this experience that potentially equip individuals with the tools by which to succeed when they venture forth into the world of work and careers. In keeping with this approach, there is a virtual cottage industry devoted to discerning which college majors best prepare students for employment. Indeed, we can do this, in part, by examining how each of the majors listed in Table 1 fare in predicting the likelihood of arts alumni staying in arts-based careers. However, there are other curricular aspects of the higher education experience that we can also assess. Those who pursue double majors are arguably broadening their pool of knowledge – which

4 There is missing information for other predictors items, as well – but none as consequential as for those involving race-ethnicity and debt. We have worked to minimize that missing information as much as we could. For instance, a number of respondents did not report their gender; where possible, we relied upon their gender as reported by their respective alma mater to fill in the information for nearly all of those missing cases. Likewise, for people who did not report their age; where possible, we drew upon their year of graduation to estimate ("impute") their age, greatly reducing the missing information for that predictor.

5 Unlike the singular items covered respectively in Tables 1 (majors / concentrations) and 2 (occupations), our items summarized in Tables 3 through Table 5 are multiple and somewhat incommensurable. As a result, the tables detailing our predictors will rely upon percentages for items that are categorical and percentages that are continuous in some sense. Those standardized measures facilitate comparison.

TABLE 4: Predictors of Stayers / Leavers: The Experience of Higher Education

Curricular	
Majors/Concentrations	*See Table 1*
Double Majors within the Arts	13.1%
Double Major of Arts with Non-Arts	3.4%
Took 2+ Years Longer than Recommended to Complete Degree/Program	7.3%
Advanced Degree	30.5%
Co-Curricular	
Influence of Social Capital on Career (5-point scale)	0.95 Avg.
Arts-Related Internship	38.8%

could lead to heightened success in future employment (Pitt & Tepper, 2012). Yet, we also wonder if all double-majors are alike. For example, those doubling in arts majors are likely making themselves "generalists" who are able to engage in a number of activities as an arts-based worker, expanding the range of jobs for which they are eligible (see Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013; Frenette et al., 2018; Pinheiro & Dowd, 2010). Yet, those combining an arts major with a non-arts major / concentration may feel the pull of the non-arts major – especially as jobs in such fields as finance or engineering can be more plentiful, or the pay can be higher, than is the case within arts-based occupations (see Carnevale & Cheah, 2015). Interestingly enough, Table 4 shows that almost four times as many SNAAP respondents double-majored or double-concentrated *within* the arts compared to those respondents combining an arts program of study with a non-arts one. Regarding another curricular predictor, those who complete their program of study in a timely fashion will likely do better as they enter the world of work and career than those who struggle to finish their efforts in higher education (see Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2014). Those taking two or more years longer than recommended comprise some 7% of all the SNAAP respondents in this study. Finally, while a college degree may prove beneficial, we know that in many settings advanced degrees are even more beneficial (Hout, 2012). The SNAAP respondents fare well on that front, with 30% of these alumni holding master's degrees or doctorates of some sort.

Of course, not all the benefits of higher education are curricular; in fact, co-curricular elements are especially noteworthy in how they prepare students for career success. On the one hand, networks of connections established at this point in life can yield all sorts of dividends following graduation – with expansive networks leading to more opportunities than do small networks (Franzen & Hangartner, 2006; Marmaros & Sacerdote, 2002; Martin, 2013). The SNAAP survey allows us to approach such "social capital" by counting the types of people whose connections with the respondents have influenced their subsequent careers – with those types of people being students; faculty and instructors; staff members or advisors; guest artists; and other arts alumni. Most of the respondents in our study, around 25,000 of them, stunningly report no type of connections as benefitting their careers (earning a score of 0 on the scale), while about 750 claim that connections with all five types of people proved to be influential (earning a score of 5); most other respondents fell towards the lower side, averaging a score of 0.95, as shown in Table 4. On the other hand, the exposure and experience that flows from internships, particularly those related to one's future field of work, can likewise set up people in various positive ways – not necessarily in the securing of an immediate job but, rather, in acquiring the know-how needed to succeed in whatever job does appear (Frenette, 2013; Martin & Frenette, 2017). Table 4 shows that more than a third of the survey respondents had an arts-related internship. We will see if that and other predictors in Table 4 matter for who stays and who leaves. People are fortunate to take part in higher education, and those who can draw upon a full range of resources and opportunities while there are even more fortunate because they are especially likely to succeed in the years following their relatively brief time on campus.

The Experience of Precarious Work

We then consider particular types of work and employment in influencing who stays and who leaves. Indeed, a group of scholars helps us think about success as it pertains to "stayers" and "leavers" by focusing particularly on success in what is deemed

"precarious work" given the abundance of temporary jobs and the like – a type of work that abounds in arts-related industries (Cornfield, 2015; Kalleberg, 2009, 2011). For example, these scholars tend to stress not the dividends that flow from arts education when accounting for success, but rather the skills and dispositions learned on the job by arts-based workers navigating both the well-documented oversupply of artistic workers and the abundance of temporary jobs (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Skaggs, 2018). As workers gain experience in securing temporary work, they often become increasingly better at securing more work, thereby keeping them successfully in the field of work they desire – such as arts-related work (Bechky, 2006; Evans & Barley, 2004; Faulkner, 1983). Other arts workers successfully navigate the vagaries of temporary work by becoming "generalists" who can work in a variety of projects and settings and, thus, enhance the range of jobs that they can attain (Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013; Faulkner, 1983; Frenette et al., 2018; Giuffre, 1999; Pinheiro & Dowd, 2009; Zuckerman et al., 2003). Of course, when jobs are especially scarce, some creative workers handle that dilemma by way of entrepreneurial efforts – creating their own organizations for themselves and fellow arts workers, managing arts organizations that benefit the broader community of artists and audiences, as well as teaching the next generation of artists (Cornfield, 2015). These scholars note that these skills are what help in a precarious line of work, but that precarity is not always overcome. Indeed, we expect that as arts-workers navigate their situation by working in non-arts jobs simultaneously, such jobs (and the opportunities that they contain) will entice them to leave the precarious work of the arts for more stable work elsewhere. That tug away from the arts towards occupations that usually pay more could especially be intense for those arts-based workers who have accrued a large amount of debt, including from their time of study in higher education (Field, 2009; Rothstein & Rouse, 2011). If entrepreneurial strategies sometimes involve the pooling of resources, so too can arrangements at home. Mates and partners can provide needed financial support to those arts-related workers who are bringing home modest paychecks, and they can also provide temporal support by covering for each other

TABLE 5: Predictors of Stayers / Leavers: The Experience of Precarious Work

Work Arrangements	
Ever Freelanced or Been Self-Employed	77.9%
Generalism (*23-point scale*)	3.22
Entrepreneurial Activity (*3-point scale*)	1.14 Avg.
Ever Worked Outside of the Arts	84.1%
Debt in Excess of $50,000	6.6%
Silent about Debt	7.5%
Home Arrangement	
Never Married	20.6%
Reporting Having Children (*under 18*)	36.6%
Reside in New York City Area	8.9%
Aging Out	
Year of Graduation	1992 Avg.

in terms of parenting responsibilities by way of the flexible schedules that are common in precarious work (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Taylor & Littleton, 2016). That being said, some research shows that artistic workers feel a tug to leave the arts when they become responsible for children for whom they must provide (Frenette, 2016; Stokes, 2017; Wing-Fai, Gill & Randle, 2015). Of course, it also may matter where your home is located: some arts-workers benefit from living in locales that contain vibrant scenes in which audiences, patrons, and venues are plentiful (Florida & Jackson, 2010; Markusen & Schrock, 2006; Pinheiro & Dowd, 2009; Shaw, 2015; Tai, 2014). Finally, we should note a very real aspect of creative work at play in this point of the trajectory: there is a tendency to "age out" of various arts-based work – especially in settings where the "newest," the "latest," the "hippest," is paramount; in settings where workers are evaluated primarily on their recent success rather than on their track records; and in settings where youth is a prerequisite for work in terms of appearance and/or performance (Frenette, 2019; Jeffri, 2005; McRobbie, 2016; Stokes, 2017; Ursell, 2000).

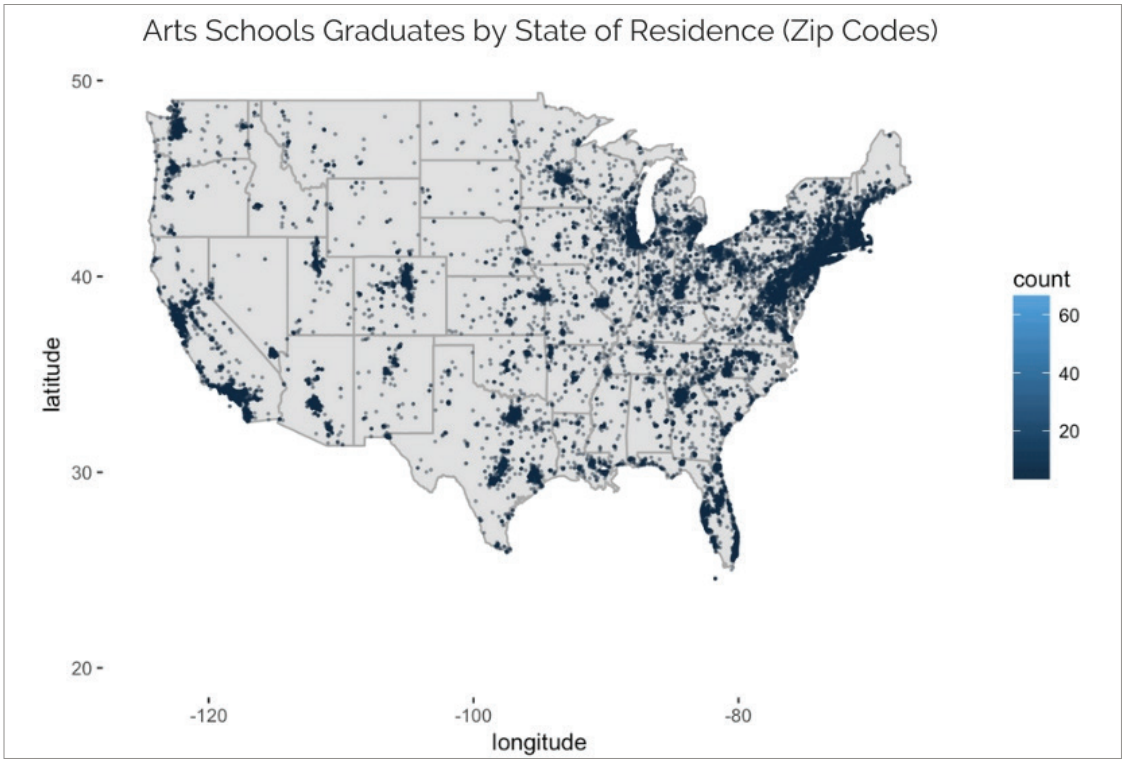
This precarious work scholarship offers an array of predictors to consider for our analysis of stayers versus leavers, as summarized in Table 5. That precarity is cast in bold relief by the sizable number of respondents who have ever freelanced (78%) or worked outside of

the arts (84%). Recall that these are individuals who trained in the arts and who also have ever worked in the arts (broadly construed), but they also have to turn to themselves and to other industries for employment. In light of that precarity, it is slightly surprising that only 6.6% have large amounts of debt; indeed, more people are silent about their debt (i.e., they did not answer the question) than are owing more than $50,000 (though, this number would be higher if our sample included recent graduates who are under 30 years old; Frenette & Tepper, 2016). Given that people are especially reluctant to answer questions about finance on surveys, and given that those who did not answer are such a relatively large share, we include them in the subsequent analysis to make sure that they are not a "non-random" group – thereby replicating here what we are also doing for those who did not answer the race-ethnicity question (see Table 3).

The precarity also brings about industriousness for certain respondents in the survey (but not all of them). We assessed entrepreneurialism in a way that is consistent with Cornfield's (2015) formulation – giving respondents a point on the scale for doing each of the activities he highlights (e.g., founding an arts organization, managing one, and teaching). Nearly 14,400 of the respondents did none of those things, while 4,302 did all three. The typical respondent did, on average, 1.14 of these things. Meanwhile, we counted as "generalism" the number of distinct arts occupations that a responded has ever done. Most respondents reported ever working in three distinct occupations.

The average respondent graduated from their arts program in 1992 – some 20 years prior to answering the survey, thereby showing that this group ranges across a number of years. Given this age range, it is not surprising to see that 80% of the sample has ever been married, but somewhat surprising to see that only 36% report having children (under 18) who live with them or are dependent on their income for support. Note that when it comes to the impact of geography, we focus especially on a common outcome in the arts, whereby one metropolitan area is so stocked with opportunities that it overshadows the opportunities found elsewhere in the nation – such as the New York City metro area in the US, the London

FIGURE 2: The Residential Location of Alumni Who "Ever-Worked" in the Arts



metro area in the UK, and the Taipei metro area in Taiwan (Dowd & Kelly, 2012; Oakley et al., 2017; Tai, 2014). When referring to the NYC area residence in Table 5, we specifically mean those arts alumni residing in the immediate metro area that spans New York City, Newark, and Jersey City. The rationale for doing so becomes especially apparent when seeing the concentration of arts-alumni found centered in and around the NYC metro area (see Figure 2). This set of predictors together might seem somewhat ad hoc in nature, that is, until realizing that all the predictors have in common how they do (or do not) help individuals better position themselves in a work environment where opportunities are often fleeting.

Arts Alumni in Their Own Words

In this section, we consider answers to two open-ended questions regarding what postsecondary institutions could have done better to prepare alumni for their careers, as well as what those institutions did well in preparing them. Until now, there has been very little systematic investigation of the open-ended answers found in the SNAAP survey, in good part, because there are tens of thousands of such answers. In fact, relying upon conventional methods of textual analysis could prove especially daunting, as it would involve reading closely each of the thousands of responses, and then developing, implementing, and double-checking time- and labor-intensive coding schemes by which to reveal patterns among the onslaught of words (Roberts et al., 2014; but see Lindemann et al., 2017 as a rare and recent exemplar of taking the conventional approach). Instead of relying on such conventional methods, we handle the tens of thousands of responses by relying on computational linguistic tools. For the purposes of this report, we rely on two rather rudimentary techniques that nonetheless reveal interesting patterns. Simply put, we first rely on a collection of "dictionaries" that enable us to distinguish the sentiments expressed in the open-ended responses – documenting both the presence and the amount of positive and negative sentiment evoked by words. We then rely upon examination of the co-occurrences of words, both in two- and three-word combinations, so as to understand better what alumni had to say when answering the two questions about their arts alma mater.[6]

What could postsecondary institutions do better?

Recent accounts of the experiences, opportunities, and challenges of arts alumni paint a seemingly contradictory picture: some accounts stress the apparently limitless opportunities for such artistic workers (e.g., Florida, 2012) whereas others highlight the challenges that artistic workers themselves face such as debt and precariousness (e.g., BFAMFAPhD, 2014). Yet, what often remains unaddressed are the collective views of arts alumni that they themselves formulate as opposed to the percentage of alumni who select one response or another on a survey.

Building on prior research that aims to bring a more nuanced understanding of the challenges *and* opportunities for arts graduates (Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2016), we consider how arts alumni who ever-worked in arts occupations answered the question: **"Is there anything that [your postsecondary institution] could have done better to prepare you for further education or for your career?"** We expected that, when able to articulate their own responses, these arts alumni would split the difference between limitlessness and precariousness of their careers, noting what they needed from their institutions in positive and in negative fashion.

We begin by visualizing the most frequently used words among these roughly 55,000 or so responses. This frequency is shown in Figure 3; the words with the largest font are also the ones most frequently used by the survey respondents. One aspect of this figure is especially striking: when alumni collectively list how

6 To be more specific, we used a combination of the "tidytext", "igraph", and "ggplot2" packages in the R statistical software package to analyze the text responses to the two open-ended questions (R Core Team, 2013). Tidytext and related packages are suitable for analyzing and visualizing large text corpora in a variety of ways including word frequencies, wordclouds, and relationships between groups of words (e.g., n-grams and correlations). We carried out our preliminary analysis in two stages: (1) simple frequencies and (2) co-occurrence and trigram counts of words. The n-gram method proved more useful in providing context to the survey responses than did the sentiment scores.

their institution could have better prepared them for their careers in the arts, there is a notable absence of prominent words regarding arts-related subject matter. In other words, there is no collective call for more training, say, in aesthetics, in technique, in theory, in critical analysis, etc. Instead, the collective emphasis is clearly on "real world" aspects of career and work. Consider, for example, the mention of "time." It is the third most frequently used word (after "art" and "students"), and it is often mentioned by respondents in combination with other telling words – such as "school" (combined with "time" in 3,473 instances), "art" (3,028 instances), "career" (2,839 instances), "program" (2,113 instances), "job" (1,972 instances), and "skills" (1,932 instances). This frequent linking of "time" with these other words (i.e., co-occurrences) suggests a strong, collective concern among these arts alumni with the temporal elements of education and career, although it is unclear how institutions of higher education could help address this concern. We know from other research that the grueling pace of student life, often paired with work and debt, makes it challenging for aspiring artists to locate, draw from, and thrive based on resources provided by one's postsecondary institution (for instance, see Frenette et al., 2018; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). We see here that this grueling pace and attendant challenges come to the collective fore when alumni are invited to assess what their institution could and should do for them.

The collective concern with the preparation for the "real world" becomes especially clear when we map systematically the most common co-occurrences of words in the responses of these art alumni. That systematic mapping is contained in Figure 4, wherein the wider the line between two words, the more frequently those words are used together in the 55,000+ open-ended responses. In fact, the second most frequent combination of two words uttered is "real world" (occurring 3,583 times) – following only the combination of students and school (which comes in at 3,969). As concern with time continues to

FIGURE 3: Word-Cloud on What Arts Education Should Do for Arts Alumni

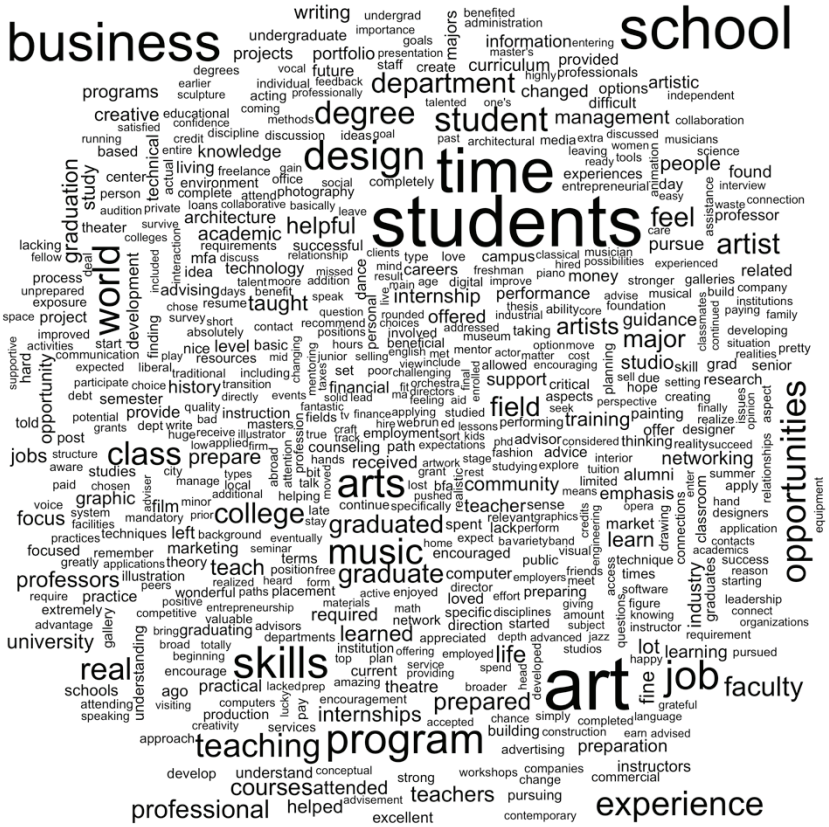
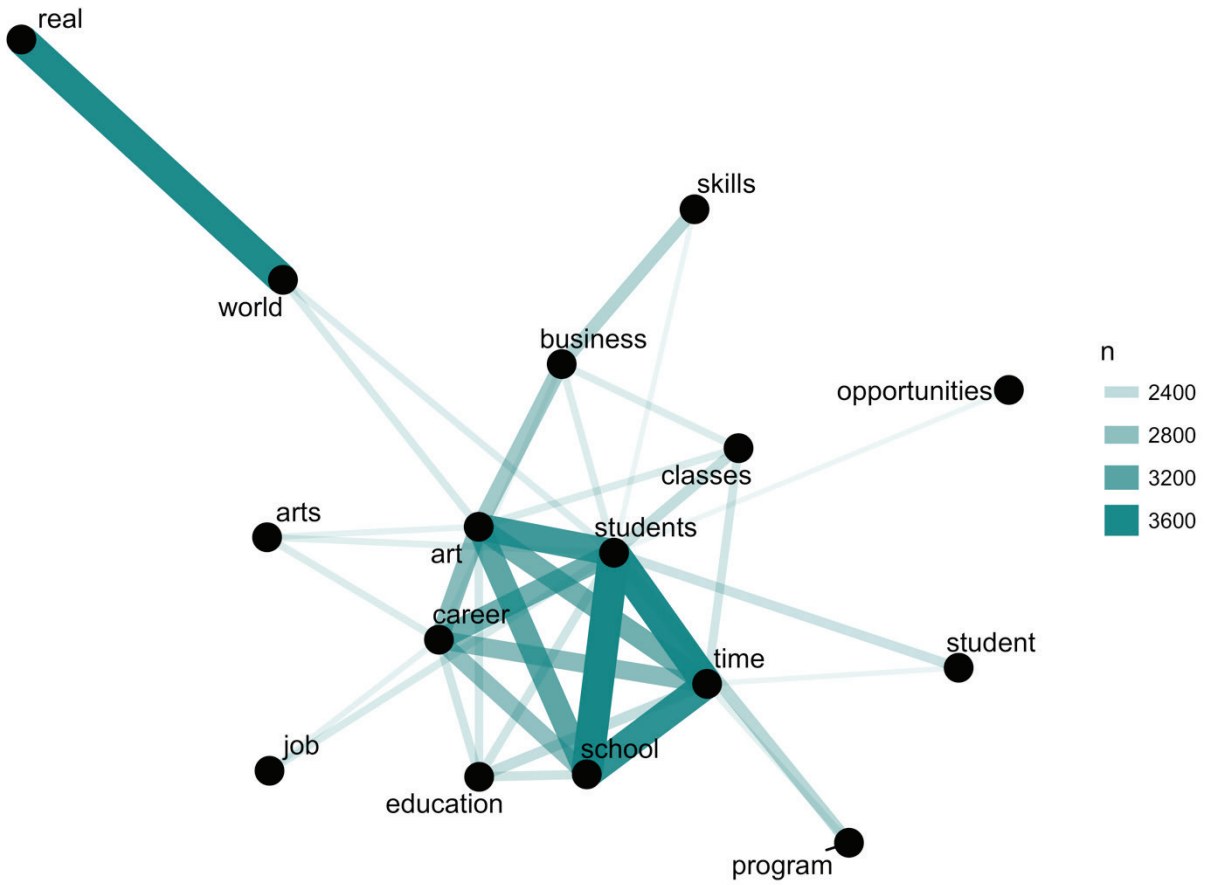


FIGURE 4: Co-Occurring Words Regarding What Arts Education Should Do for Alumni



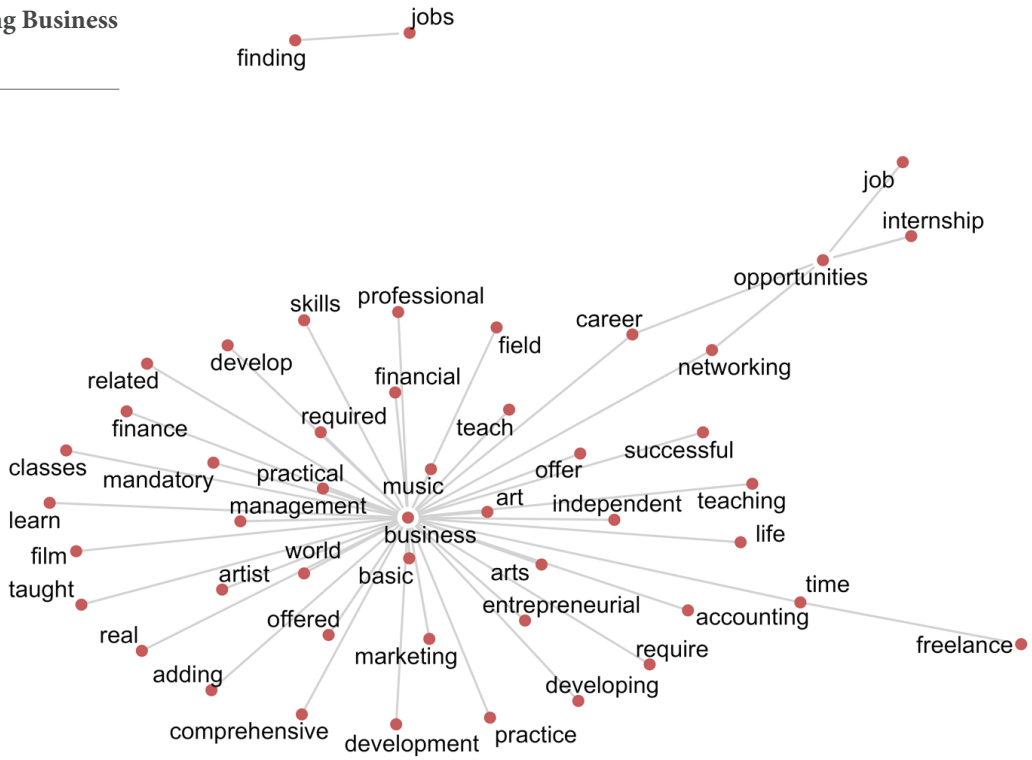
be evident in this Figure 4 (as it is in Figure 3), we see here also the point that these alumni wish that they had received more preparation in terms of art and career, of art and business, of business and classes, and so forth.

To delve even further into such real world concerns – particularly as they relate to managing one's career (e.g., freelance) and one's finances (e.g., debt) – we look at three-word combinations in which "business" and such related topics as "freelance" and "debt" are the middle word in those combinations. Those are depicted in Figure 5. The focus here is not on frequency of word combinations, but rather on gaining a clearer understanding of how "business" is evoked by the respondents. Out of school, at least 30 years old (and often much older than that), and having worked in an arts-related occupation, these survey respondents wish that their alumni institution had taught them about the nuts-and-bolts aspects of their work – including how to network and promote themselves, how to handle debt and budgets, how to manage the business concerns associated with their particular arts-based work, how to be entrepreneurial, and how to find jobs. Previous sociological research has found that such things matter greatly for those who work in the arts (Frenette & Tepper, 2016). We see here that for a broad swath of arts-based workers, it matters for them to such a degree that it is on the tip of their tongue, so to speak.

What do postsecondary institutions do well?

When arts alumni speak of what their arts institutions *should* have done to prepare them for their respective careers in the arts, they overwhelmingly emphasize factors that veered more towards real world concerns (e.g., business, jobs, finances) and away from arts-related and traditional liberal arts concerns (e.g., aesthetics, history, critical thinking). The latter concerns are not unimportant. Indeed, we suspect that the alumni are relatively silent on those issues

FIGURE 5: Linked Words Evoking Business Concerns among Arts Alumni



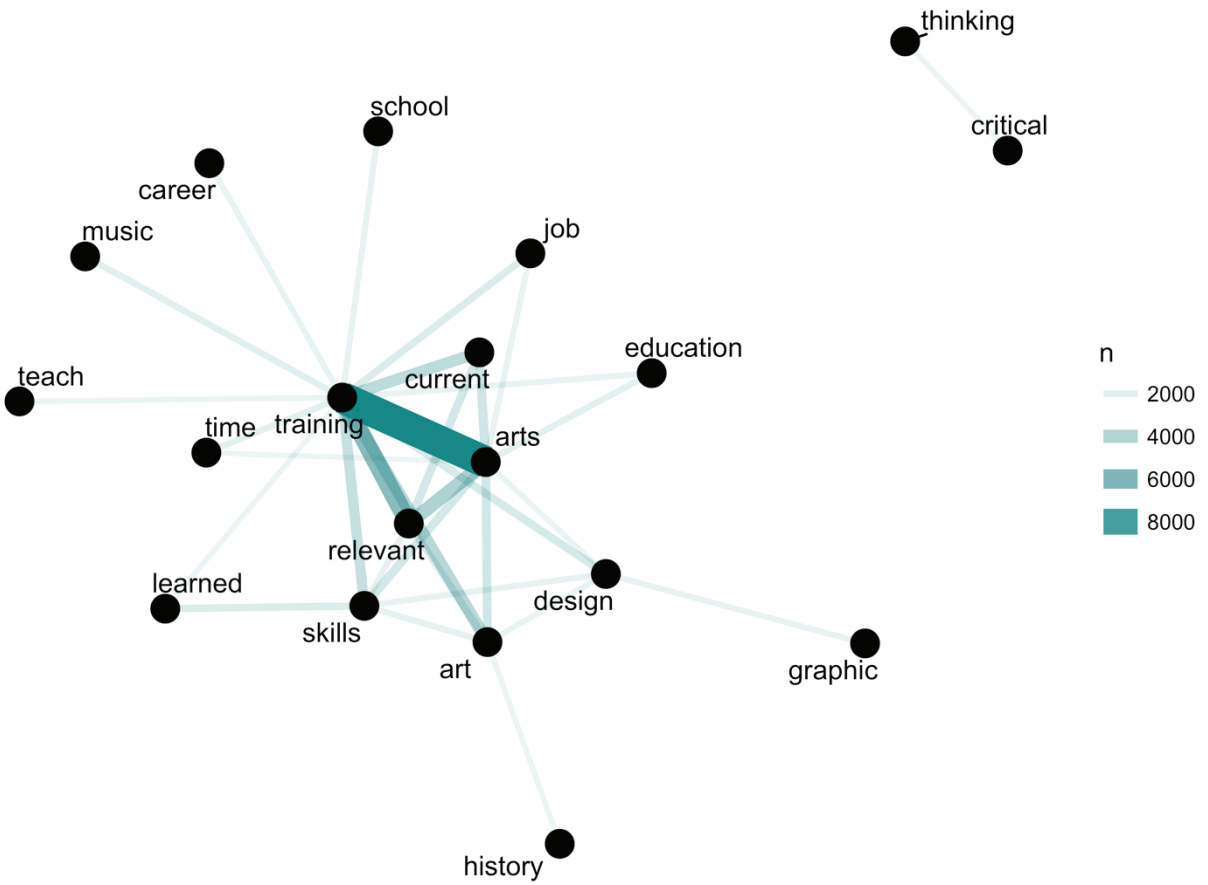
when answering the previous question because their institutions have already prepared them well in such subject matters (see Frenette & Tepper, 2016). Our suspicions are borne out when turning to their collective response to the following prompt: "**Please describe how your arts training is or is not relevant to your current work.**" As this query was only targeted to the currently employed respondents in the SNAAP survey, we are not surprised to see a smaller number of arts alumni who chose to offer a response[7] (50,322 for this item versus 55,301 for the previous item).

Figure 6 visually summarizes the words that arts alumni most frequently used when describing their arts training. When turning from what these arts workers *should* have received from their education to the perceived relevance of their arts training to their current work, their responses take on a strikingly different character. Indeed, words like "art" (offered 13,646 times), "arts" (17,455), "training" (20,874), and "relevant" (13,056) are among the most frequently mentioned words. Looking closely at the word-cloud

FIGURE 6: Word-Cloud on How Arts Training Is or Is Not Relevant to Current Work for Arts Alumni

7 This item also comes much later in the SNAAP survey than the "What could postsecondary institutions do better" question and therefore the lower response rate might be due to "survey fatigue" (Miller & Lambert, 2014)

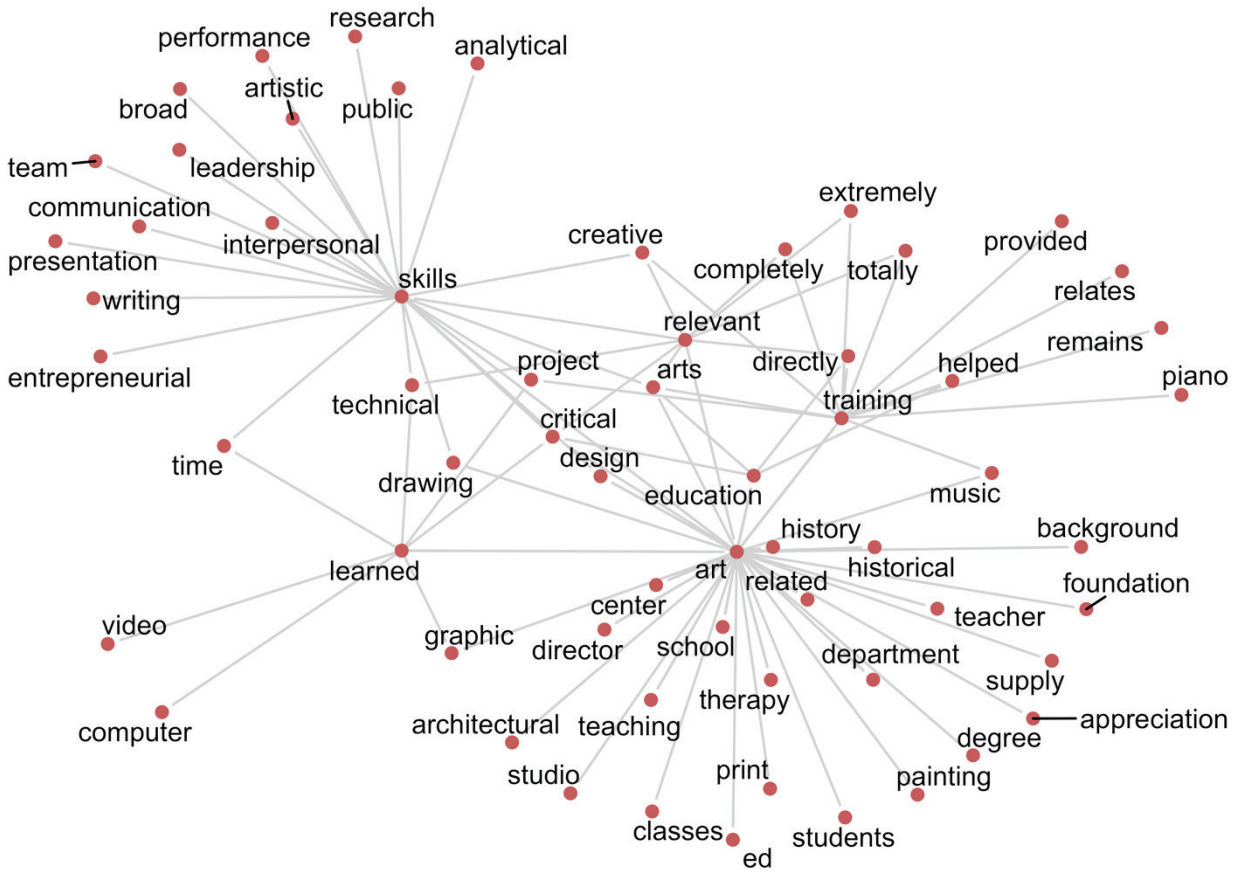
FIGURE 7: Co-Occurring Words Regarding How Arts Training Is or Is Not Relevant to Current Work for Alumni



in Figure 6, we also see that words like "creative," "thinking," and "critical" are somewhat common words mentioned in the same response as the word "skills." Unlike what is depicted in Figure 3, this particular query does *not* prompt students to mention frequently the word "business" – thereby reinforcing the conclusion regarding the need for more real world training that we drew in the previous section. What Figure 6 begins to reveal about the strength of arts education in higher education grows even clearer when, in Figure 7, we turn to the most frequent co-occurrence of words offered by respondents. The combination of "arts training" is the most frequent one used (9,785 times) – followed by "relevant training" (5,607) and "art training" (4,132). Even more interesting are the frequent combination of words that address arts content (i.e., those involving "music," "design," and "graphic" and "history") and that address a core aspect of the liberal arts curriculum ("critical thinking," see Liu & Grusky, 2013).

In fact, when we zoom in tightly on three-word combinations that end with words dealing with the knowledge gained while pursuing an arts curriculum ("skills," "learned," "relevant," "training," and "art"), an instructive constellation of topics emerges. This is shown in Figure 8 on the next page. In the upper left corner of that figure, there is a linking of the "well-rounded" traits that the liberal arts curriculum offers – leadership, presentation, communication, and interpersonal skills (Astin, 1999). Note that these are likely the *abstract* version of the concrete skills that arts education would have provided them about the real-world of arts-based work (compare Figure 8 to Figure 5): that is, while higher arts education imparts to their alumni the ability to be entrepreneurial in the general sense, those same alumni are requesting training on the specifics of being entrepreneurial in arts-related occupations. Meanwhile, the abstract skills depicted in the left-hand corner of Figure 8 are closely aligned with the intellectual (e.g., critical, technical, appreciation) and the artistic (e.g.,

FIGURE 8: Linked Words Evoking Acquired Knowledge among Arts Alumni



piano, drawing, video, historical background) skills that the survey respondents maintain that they were provided by their respective alma mater.

What arts alumni are telling us

We have used computational linguistics to use arts alumni's own words to make sense of arts education and its effectiveness. Although the techniques we relied upon were rudimentary, a clear story nonetheless emerged. It is not a story of limitless horizons (e.g., Florida, 2012) or crushing constraints (e.g., BFAMFAPhD, 2014). When offering their collective assessments regarding what they did and did not receive from their respective alma mater, arts alumni clearly articulated both strengths and weaknesses, both positives and negatives, and both have and have not. Nor was the story one that pits the "real world" against the "ivory tower" – with the supposedly cerebral and clinical things offered in higher education having no bearing on or relevance for the heart and soul of the arts and their artists (see Berliner, 1994; Elkins, 2001). In fact, arts alumni noted the valuable things they learned from an arts education – including arts-specific knowledge, intellectual skills, and general traits that are beneficial beyond the campus. Rather than downplay such valuable aspects of their education, they also noted that higher arts education should *add* more types of knowledge to its curriculum. Arts-related occupations are often precarious (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Skaggs, 2018). While artistic knowledge and general knowledge are valuable assets for negotiating that precarity, the alumni further propose very specific business and managerial knowledge that could give them that extra resource – an important resource that will not eliminate the precariousness found in arts-based occupations, but hopefully help them keep that precarity at bay.

In our experience, the liberal arts curriculum is often cast as encouraging those in the sciences and other "applied" areas of study to expand their horizons by

generously sampling from other domains that will enrich them intellectually and, shall we say, spiritually (Chew & McInnis-Bowers, 2004; Tepper et al., 2014). The arts play a key role in this liberal arts curriculum, edifying students by way of literature, music, painting, and the like. We see less of an emphasis on the latter part of this "equation," whereby those students in the arts are likewise encouraged to ground themselves in the "applied" areas of study on campus – particularly those dealing with finance, management, and law. It does not seem to us that the arts alumni participating in the SNAAP survey are requesting a curriculum tightly adhering to career training. Instead, they are asking for a liberal arts type of curriculum for the arts that likewise incorporates the knowledge needed for those careers that many students will one day pursue.

Arts Alumni in Their Own Deeds

In emphasizing the precariousness of arts-based occupations (e.g., Skaggs, 2018), we do not mean to suggest that people working in those occupations are paralyzed by that precarity. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Indeed, arts-based workers *do* a number of things to cope with that precarity, as well as to by-pass it where possible (Frenette & Ocejo, 2019; McRobbie, 2016; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). At the most basic level, for instance, we know that a good portion of arts alumni go on to arts-based work, and we know that some continue that work in the present (see Figure 1). Their deeds are also motivated by various factors – including the three areas we detailed in previous pages regarding societal inequality, higher education, and precarious employment. These findings provided us with a large group of hypotheses by which to understand (if not predict) what arts alumni might do with regards to staying or leaving arts-based occupations. In this section of the report, we test those hypotheses in order to see which ones matter in combined fashion for the success of arts alumni – "success" here being conceptualized as staying in (rather than leaving) arts-based work.

We make use of a statistical technique known as "logistic regression." Paraphrasing Dowd and colleagues (2016, p. 18): this technique

TABLE 6: The Net Impact That Majors / Concentrations Have Upon the Odds of Staying

MAJOR	LIKELIHOOD INCREASE/DECREASE
Architecture	185.1%
Design	140.1%
Arts Education	*Not Significant*
Music History	*Not Significant*
Media Art	*Not Significant*
Music History	*Not Significant*
Writing	*Not Significant*
Art History	-28.5%
Other	-31.6%
Theater	-43.7%
Dance	-46.9%
Arts Administration & Management	-47.5%

Note: Fine Arts Major is reference category; N=43,638; Pseudo R-squared=0.333; p<0.001; One-tailed Test

> …allows us to gauge the likelihood that a given outcome will occur [i.e., that respondents will stay in arts-based work], while simultaneously examining the impact of the [many predictors]. We can see whether each [predictor] has any independent bearing on the outcome of interest (as denoted by attaining "significance") and, if so, how much it shapes of the odds of that outcome occurring…

In the pages that follow, we present the results of a single regression model that contains all of the predictors at once. Yet, for purposes of clarity and ease of interpretation, we present that single model in installments. We thus remind the readers, then, that whether the impact of, say, being a freelancer increases the odds of staying in the arts by a given number – that impact is calculated by simultaneously assessing the impact of *all* the other predictors (see Pampel, 2000).

Table 6 provides the first installment from our larger statistical model. Given the spotlight that President Obama unintentionally put on the art history major, and given the recent research associated with assessing which majors are best for a successful career (Carnevale & Cheah, 2015), we start by considering

the impact of majors / concentration on the odds that those alumni who have ever worked in an arts-based occupation will continue to do so. Note that when employing a categorical variable (like "architecture major") in logistic regression, one of the related categories must be used as a reference. To make that intuitive, it is somewhat like in compositional grammar, whereupon the use of "than" necessitates a comparison ("than *what*?"). The results in Table 6 are comparing all the majors to the reference category of the fine arts major (which is the largest in terms of alumni numbers; see Table 1).[8]

The majors / concentrations are arrayed in descending order – starting with the major that has the highest, positive associated odds with staying in an arts-based occupation, and ending with the one that has the most sizable negative odds. Five of the majors are not significant, meaning that they do not stand out in terms of predicting who stays or leaves the arts (arts education, music history, media arts, music, and writing). As we expected, given the relatively formalized and credentialed nature of this domain (Quinn, 2003), architecture has the strongest link between its major and the success of its alumni remaining employed in arts-based occupations. Indeed, majoring in architecture increases the odds of being a stayer (versus a leaver) by 185% when compared to fine arts majors – that is nearly doubling the odds. In fact, of all the majors, only architecture and design have a positive relationship with staying in the arts. Meanwhile, arts alumni who majored in four other areas face a reduced likelihood of staying in arts-based work. Those majoring in art history, when compared to those majoring in fine arts, are almost 29% less likely to stay after ever having worked in the arts.

It appears, then, that President Obama was right when initially musing about the returns on an art history major – at least with regards to remaining in the arts for employment. That being said, other majors fare worse in that regard than does art history (e.g., dance, arts administration and management). However, we strongly caution against over-emphasizing the findings as they pertain to the arts majors / concentrations. The significant findings in Table 6 are not the only ones that matter, as we show in the pages below. For example, other aspects of the higher education environment also matter for the successful continuation of an arts-based career – such as forming connections with key individuals or having an internship. Hence, for those majors listed above that have no impact or a negative impact on sustained careers in the arts, there are other ways for students to offset that negative impact via curricular and co-curricular interventions. That point must be taken into consideration when looking at Table 6.

TABLE 7: The Net Impact That Social Inequality Has Upon the Odds of Staying

CHARACTERISTIC	LIKELIHOOD INCREASE/DECREASE
Gender	
Female (vs. Male)	-15.1%
Race-Ethnicity	
Person of Color (vs. White)	-23.4%
No Race-Ethnicity Claimed (vs. White)	*Not Significant*
Class	
First Generation Student	*Not Significant*
Parents Are Artists	*Not Significant*

Note: Fine Arts Major is reference category; N=43,638; Pseudo R-squared=0.333; p<0.001; One-tailed Test

Table 7 offers the portion of our logistic regression model that assesses the impact of social inequality by way of gender, race, and class. As shown in Table 3, except for the group of white survey respondents, all of the other racial-ethnic groups are respectively small in number. Given that, we combined those groups into a larger one that we describe as involving people of color.

Inequalities in the larger society permeate other social settings, such as those of home, neighborhood, and work (see Choo & Ferree, 2010; Harvey Wingfield & Taylor, 2016; Sewell, 2016). Hence, historical patterns

8 While we drew upon imputation wherever possible to handle missing cases (see footnote 4), we could not address all such missing cases. Even if each predictor variable has but a couple of hundred cases of missing information, the total number of missing cases grows when more than 30 variables are all used in the analysis. That is how we "lost" roughly 8,600 cases – resulting in the N of 43,638 for our final logistic regression model. That said, we did explore the missing cases for each variable, working to ensure that those missing were not a non-random group (see Alexander, 2018). For substantive reasons, we report the missing as a group for both race-ethnicity and debt.

in the construction of gender and race, as well as the attendant racism and sexism, "get into" contemporary interaction, employment practices, and so forth. The results in Table 7 starkly show that to be the case for arts-related work. Recall that the results shown in this table take into consideration all other predictors: we are seeing the impact of race and gender after controlling for a host of *other* factors that mark the SNAAP survey respondents – such as their level of education, age, generalism, entrepreneurialism, etc. Even when taking all those factors into statistical account, the odds of women alumni staying in arts-related occupations (after already arriving there) are reduced by 15% when compared to men alumni, and the odds for people of color are reduced by 24% when compared to white alumni. Note that, according to Table 3, women are more numerous than men, yet in terms of a career trajectory within the arts they fare less well. It is also revealing that those respondents who do not claim a race in the SNAAP survey are statistically *no different* from the white individuals who do (the reference category in Table 7). This suggests, in turn, that many of those who do not divulge their racial-ethnic identity in the survey are, indeed, white individuals (see Alexander, 2018). If that is the case, then the arts alumni who are people of color occupy an even smaller share of arts-related occupations than it seems at first glance – all while also occupying a disadvantaged position relative to white alumni. In additional analyses not reported here, we examine whether or not race and gender "intersected," as when women of color are especially less likely to stay in the arts than everyone else (see Choo & Ferree, 2010). We find no statistical support for that intersectionality – at least not as it pertains to SNAAP alumni and their arts career trajectories.

We suggested earlier in this report that, in the grander scheme of things, the SNAAP arts alumni are relatively privileged when compared to the many aspiring artists who lack higher education degrees and the "perks" that accompany such degrees. The nonsignificant findings regarding class are consistent with that suggestion. SNAAP survey respondents do not differ along these two social class elements in terms of whether or not they remain in the arts: the trajectories of first generation students are no different from the trajectories of the more affluent, while the trajectories of those who are children of artists are no different from the trajectories of those who, say, are children of accountants. We suspect that class-based differences among those in the arts likely appear when comparing the careers of those with college degrees to those without.

Prior research shows that social class matters greatly for the higher education experience, especially when the lifestyles and sensibilities that are common for affluent students are likewise endorsed and rewarded by the colleges and universities that they attend (Kane, 2011; McMillan Cottom, 2017; Rivera, 2015). Yet, these proponents also make the point that there is something distinctive about this environment that is consequential in preparing and launching people into careers. Put another way, "class" in the curricular sense may have an impact on career trajectories that operates by a different logic than "class" in the social inequality sense.

We already have seen the particular impact of the curriculum in previous results: the majors of architecture and design have notable impact on the career trajectories of their respective alumni, raising the odds that those alumni will stay in an arts-based occupation. Yet there are also limits to that type of curricular impact: five majors have no significant impact on whether their respective alumni will stay or leave the arts years down the road – with some majors also associated with a *reduced* likelihood of their alumni remaining in arts-based occupations (see Table 6). Hence, it is not surprising that, in Table 8 (below), the results show that double-majoring *within* the arts has no significant impact on whether alumni stay or leave the arts. For instance, if students combine two arts majors that each have no significant impact, then their double major will likewise have no significant impact with regards to staying or leaving the arts. What is striking, however, is that those respondents with a double major that combines a major in the arts with one *outside* the arts, when compared to respondents with only a single major, those particular double-majors are 38% less likely to stay in the arts as a career. That suggests that those with one foot outside the arts, in this case, intellectually and curricularly, likewise have a "tug" to move beyond

the arts in terms of employment – something that we will also see for those with one foot outside the arts in terms of work experience.

Table 8 shows that, in certain ways, the world of arts alumni is like other worlds: those who struggle to complete their program of study in a timely fashion are also less likely to stay in the arts over an extended time compared to those who complete their program of study within the expected time. Meanwhile, those with advanced degrees are more successful than those with only an undergraduate degree – "successful" in that the odds of them remaining in an arts-based career are 133% greater in comparison to those who did not pursue a graduate degree.

Table 8 also illuminates in compelling fashion that the impact of class in the curricular sense is joined by the impact of the co-curricular. Indeed, the higher education experience is not only one of absorbing knowledge in the classroom, it is also one in which students can forge key connections. While it may be difficult for a student to predict which connections will *eventually* have a positive influence on their subsequent careers, the data clearly show that such influential connections are consequential – with each type they have (be it influential peer, influential faculty, influential guest artist, and so forth) raising the odds that they will later remain in the arts by an additional 125% when compared to those alumni (the majority of the SNAAP respondents) who did not make such connections. Scholars have previously argued that social capital is among the easiest "currencies" to acquire – especially when compared to the effort needed to acquire money (economic capital) and specialized knowledge (cultural capital) – and that social capital can, in turn, be converted into other types of capitals, as when musicians use their connections to secure paying jobs (see Anheier et al., 1995; Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013; Scott, 2012). The results in Table 8 do indeed support the wisdom and benefits of acquiring such social capital while a student.

The higher education environment is also one in which students learn other types of knowledge not conveyed in the classroom. This is a point that, in the previous section, we saw SNAAP respondents make in their own words. If the arts curriculum in higher education is indeed short on information regarding the "real world" of arts-based occupations and industries, one way of gleaning that knowledge is by way of an arts-based internship. There are admittedly debates and drawbacks associated with internships of all types – including the possibility of students being exploited for free labor (see Frenette, 2013). That being said, there are also career benefits associated with arts-based internships. Indeed, the formalized internships associated with architecture – and the somewhat formalized internships in design – may have heightened the success of their majors in terms of staying in arts-based work (see Table 6; see also Frenette et al., 2015; Quinn, 2003). Table 8 also reveals that those alumni with arts-based internships of all types (not just in architecture or design) are 112% more likely to have a career trajectory that involves staying in the arts, an advantage that stands out in comparison to those alumni who did not have such an internship while pursuing a program of study.
The results in Table 8 thus give further clarity to the

TABLE 8: The Net Impact of the Higher Education Experience Upon the Odds of Staying

EXPERIENCE	LIKELIHOOD INCREASE/DECREASE
Curricular	
Majors/Concentration	See Table 6
Double Major within the Arts (vs. Single Major)	Not Significant
Double Major of Arts with Non-Arts (vs. Single Major)	-37.9%
Took 2+ Years Longer than Recommended to Complete Degree/Program (vs. All Else)	-17.3%
Advanced Degree (vs. Bachelor's Degree)	133.1%
Co-Curricular	
Influence of Social Capital on Career	
(5-point scale)	124.9%
Arts-Related Internship (vs. No Internship)	112.5%

Note: Fine Arts Major is reference category; N=43,638; Pseudo R-squared=0.333; p<0.001; One-tailed Test

TABLE 9: The Net Impact of Precarious Employment on the Odds of Staying

CHARACTERISTIC	LIKELIHOOD INCREASE/DECREASE
Work Arrangements	
Ever Freelanced or Been Self-Employed (vs. Not)	187.3%
Generalism (23 point scale)	140.0%
Entrepreneurial Activity (3-point scale)	140.8%
Ever Worked Outside of the Arts (vs. Not)	-88.8%
Debt in Excess of $50,000 (vs. No to Some Debt)	-16.4%
Silent about Debt (vs. No to Some Debt)	*Not Significant*
Home Arrangements	
Never Married (vs. Ever Married)	*Not Significant*
Report Having Child under 18 (vs. None)	*Not Significant*
Reside in NYC Area (vs. Elsewhere)	118.2%
Aging Out	
Year of Graduation	101.0%

Note: Fine Arts Major is reference category; N=43,638; Pseudo R-squared=0.333; p<0.001; One-tailed Test

results that Table 6 offers about various arts-based majors. Consider the example of a student majoring in art history – the very major mentioned by President Obama. If that student spends her time and effort solely on classroom requirements, she will have slightly decreased odds of staying in an arts-based occupation years later. To be sure, she may get a positive bump in those odds by completing her art history degree in a timely fashion. But for additional and substantial returns regarding that arts-career trajectory, she should also expand her efforts beyond the classroom by making connections with peers, faculty, staff, guest artists, and alumni, and she should also consider an arts-based internship. The positive returns on those co-curricular activities will, in turn, greatly bolster the odds that she will have a career trajectory that will involve her staying in the arts – regardless of her major. Among the various predictors of who stays and who leaves, precarious employment is the most closely linked to the context at the heart of our study: the career trajectories of those in arts-related industries. The social inequality predictors rest upon a concern with discrimination and the higher education variables rest upon a concern with edification. In contrast, the precarious employment predictors rest upon a concern with survival. Hence, precarious employment tends to point to the various things that people have to do in order to succeed (even modestly) in career settings where work is temporary, where educational credentials are not required, and where competitors for jobs are numerous.

It is that concern with career survival that lies at the heart of the predictors in Table 9. To be sure, as Menger (1999, 2014) notes, there are some in the arts who have full-time and stable employment by way of arts-based organizations – such as orchestras, museums, universities, etc. (see DiMaggio, 2006 regarding such organizations). But, as Menger and many others note (e.g., Bechky, 2006; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Skaggs, 2018), a good portion of those in arts-related occupations also face the prospect of temporary jobs, with those who can undertake such jobs doing better than those who cannot do so in this precarious world. In fact, we find clear evidence of that among the SNAAP respondents. When compared to those who have not freelanced (or worked for themselves), arts alumni who *have* done so increase the odds that they will stay in arts-based work by more than 180%. In other words, they have a very different career trajectory than their counterparts, being much more likely to stay in rather than leave the arts.

While the quip of "jack of all trades, masters of none" pejoratively describes those who do not settle into a single specialization, and supposedly do not hone particular skills and abilities, research in arts-based careers suggests that "generalism" (rather than specialization) can be beneficial (see Faulkner, 1983; Pinheiro & Dowd, 2009; Zuckerman et al., 2003). For some in arts-based work, the ability to work across occupations can bolster such things as pay and work opportunities (see also Frenette et al., 2018). Thus, generalism too can be something that arts-based workers do to survive. The results in Table 9 give

considerable support to that idea. Compared to arts-based workers who are more prone to specialization, those that expand the number of occupations in which they have worked, in turn, raise the odds of staying in the arts by 140% for each occupation (recall, though, that most SNAAP respondents work only in one or a few occupations).

In the precarious world of work, where there are many things that people may feel compelled to do to succeed, there are other factors that pull alumni away from arts-based careers. While generalism has its positive benefits on staying in the arts, ever working in occupations that are *not* arts-based reduces the odds of staying in the arts by 89%, when compared to those who only work in arts-based occupations. Hence, those with one foot out of the arts – be it by way of double-major during a program of study or by way of post-graduation work experience – are more likely to be leavers rather than stayers. Meanwhile, those who accrue more than $50,000 in debt from their education are slightly less likely to stay in arts-based employment than are those with under $50,000 in debt. Interestingly enough, those who do not divulge their debt in the SNAAP survey are not substantially different from those who report no or minimal debt with regards to career trajectories.

If temporary work and generalism are some of the things that certain arts-based workers may feel compelled to do, Cornfield (2015) also emphasizes those things that are generous of them to do. Drawing on his extensive research in Nashville, he pays particular attention to those musicians who build a community for other musicians in terms of work and connections, even as the larger world of music is growing more precarious with each passing decade. Such musicians, he notes, start arts-organizations of their own, administer and manage arts-organizations founded by others, and pass on their artistic knowledge to others by way of teaching. The results in Table 9 strongly show that such efforts not only create solidarity for arts-based workers, they also benefit those very individuals who engage in that entrepreneurialism. Indeed, in the 3-point scale that we use, a SNAAP respondent gets 1 point for each of the activities stressed by Cornfield. Recall, that most of the SNAAP respondents do one or none of the entrepreneurial activities. In comparison to those that do none, for each one that arts alumni have done, the odds of them staying in the arts rises by 141% – an increase that also accompanies doing another and then another of these entrepreneurial activities.

Whereas the jack of all trades quip does not necessarily apply to career trajectories in the arts, "location, location, location" certainly does, both in terms of geography and time. The concentration of arts-based workers in particular locales is often accompanied, if not enabled, by a larger "infrastructure" that supports these arts-based individuals. That infrastructure includes the types of entrepreneurial organizations described by Cornfield (2015), but it also includes such organizations as venues, unions, professional associations, media companies, periodicals, booking agents and agencies, etc. – as well as a large and developed audience for such efforts (see Florida & Jackson, 2010; Shaw, 2015; Skaggs, 2018; Tai, 2014). While a number of cities in the US have such an infrastructure to varying degrees, New York City stands out for the massiveness of its infrastructure – which in turn affords more opportunities for arts-based workers there than elsewhere in the United States (see Dowd & Kelly, 2012; Pinheiro & Dowd, 2009). Such opportunities are evident in Table 9: those arts-based workers who reside in and around New York City, when compared to those who live elsewhere, are 118% more likely to have a career trajectory that keeps them in the arts. While "domestic arrangement" does not matter (as noted by the two nonsignificant findings), we do see that "geographical" and "temporal" location do. As the graduation year of arts alumni moves further and further away from the current year, arts alumni are increasingly less likely to stay in the arts. They appear, then, to be aging out.

Predicting Who Stays and Who Leaves

We have relied upon statistical analysis to tell a story about arts alumni, and we attempt to parse out their efforts in the classroom, in co-curricular settings, and

in post-graduation work settings. While only hinting at the full level of their collective activity, this analysis nonetheless demonstrates forcefully the ramifications regarding not only who arts alumni are in terms of race and gender, but also in what they have done – ramifications that apply to the very career trajectories they have taken. The arts alumni in the SNAAP sample tend to combine the elements mentioned above in relatively unique fashion. For example, even among those alumni who are similar in age, they can nonetheless differ greatly in terms of their majors, their entrepreneurial activities, their location of residence, etc. Just as all the arts can be very different from each other, so too can those who work in the arts.

Despite considerable variation across the arts and among artists, our analyses yield three main patterns regarding who stays and who leaves. First, the arts are not immune from the inequalities that occur in the larger society. Hence, women and people of color are more likely to have trajectories that take them away from arts-based careers than are men and whites. Second, just as Gary Fine (2017, 2018) notes that having an arts degree matters, we demonstrate that the higher education experience as a whole likewise matters. It would be a mistake to equate this educational experience with majors alone. Indeed, timely completion of degree, the securing of advanced degrees – as well as the pursuit of personal connections and internships – all combine to bolster a career trajectory that involves staying in rather than leaving the arts. Third, while higher education can have a palpable and positive impact on the career trajectories of arts alumni, what those arts alumni do post-graduation can likewise have an important impact. These deeds include where they choose to live and the ways that they manage the oft-precarious work that they encounter, as when being freelancers, entrepreneurs, and generalists. It is not the ivory tower versus the real world that shapes career trajectories across the arts, it is the ivory tower *and* the real world.

Concluding Comments

Who stays, and who leaves? That simple question inspired us to complete this report. We drew upon the words and the deeds of over 50,000 arts graduates, using linguistic and statistical analysis respectively, to consider the impact of societal inequality, higher educational effectiveness, and worker strategies and dispositions. While we have provided theoretically and empirically informed answers to that simple yet weighty question above, we see the need for future work that digs into aspects that our results could not fully address – notably, the ways that social class inequality may work in arts-based careers and the complexities invoked in the relationship between the ivory tower and the real world.

We find that arts alumni with college-educated parents are no more likely than first-generation college students to stay in the arts, which could imply – contrary to previous research (O'Brien et al., 2016) – that artistic labor markets are relatively meritocratic. We would hope, however, that no one would draw that conclusion from our research. Instead, we encourage the readers to think about other ways that social class can matter. For example, Martin and Frenette (2017) find that arts alumni with a parent or close family member who is an artist are more likely to report career skills development and social engagement while in school; furthermore, those resources are predictive of shorter job searches after graduation. Put differently, existing research shows that social class background – in the form of cultural capital (i.e., specialized and valued knowledge) and connections – helps arts graduates launch their careers, but our data suggest that such connections and knowledge are not sufficient for people to *stay* in the arts long-term. Such a finding is consistent with prior research on creative labor, which shows that one's career is continually under scrutiny; you are only considered as good as your recent exploits, and relationships for sustaining a career must continually be forged or maintained (Blair, 2001; Faulkner, 1983; Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012). Although social class background as measured by parents' level of education does not predict who stays and who leaves the arts, differences in economic resources become more evident when we consider the role of student debt. Prior SNAAP research finds that debt levels among arts students have increased considerably in recent decades (Lena et al., 2014),

and early SNAAP research tentatively suggested that having any student loan debt is associated with shorter artistic careers (Lindemann et al., 2012). We find that alumni with large amounts of student debt (over $50,000) are significantly more likely to leave the arts than individuals who report lower levels of debt. Clearly, student loan debt is a national problem, and the arts are not exempt from this troubling trend. However, data from SNAAP surveys only tell us about the economic challenges and shortfalls faced by *arts alumni* as they pursue career trajectories within or outside the arts. We expect that economic challenges and shortfalls are even more pressing and consequential for those arts-based workers *without d*egrees who find themselves wondering whether they should stay or leave. In order to show the full impact of social class background on arts-based careers, there is a need for research that also systematically tracks those without degrees who move in and out of the arts. Consider now the relationship between the "ivory tower" and the "real world." On the one hand, we find that experiences in both matter for the career trajectories of arts alumni. On the other hand, we also find that arts alumni are clearly distressed by the disconnect between these two. That distress echoes previous statistical analyses of SNAAP data, which reveal "skills mismatches" in terms of entrepreneurial skills as well as financial and business management skills: only one out of four arts alumni report that their postsecondary institution helped them develop those skills, but about three out of four arts alumni indicate that these skills are "very" or "somewhat" important to their work life (Frenette & Tepper, 2016). On the whole, postsecondary arts institutions are good at helping students think, create, and communicate, but they could be better at training for entrepreneurial and business practicalities.

This disjuncture between the ivory tower and the real world in arts education has a long history. The landmark study *Investing in Creativity* (Jackson et al., 2003), a national study on the support structure for artists in the US, finds that one of the types of training artists need the most – business skills – is often not available from conventional postsecondary arts programs. Instead, artists must rely on training and guidance from local arts agencies, artist-focused organizations and networks, learning from peers and mentors, and community-based organizations. Moreover, the study concludes that one of artists' most salient needs is for "training and professional development that helps them make shifts throughout their careers – in artistic skill level, from emerging to mid-career to master levels" (Jackson et al., 2003, p. 63). In essence, this study reports that artists would greatly benefit from more entrepreneurial-focused curricula within higher education. In recent years, several scholars and arts leaders have also called for more professional and business-related training within postsecondary arts education (e.g., Dempster, 2017; Essig, 2009; Gerber & Childress, 2017; Skaggs et al., 2017). The problem is partly structural, as Douglas Dempster diagnoses: "most faculty members in most arts schools have limited or little experience with the professional practices required of an artist employed entirely outside the patronage of an educational organization" (Dempster, 2017, p. 1590).

Whether one stays in or leaves an artistic career, each option undoubtedly carries its own benefits and costs, often in ways that are difficult to diagnose. Who stays, and who leaves? We have attempted to answer this question as thoroughly as our evidence at hand allows. We also, though, have come to see the related questions that need answering as well. How do artistic workers balance the costs or challenges of staying in the arts (including potentially lower salaries, less stable sources of income, and no social benefits compared to non-arts work) as well as the joys, purpose, meaning, and other benefits stemming from such work? How do artistic workers balance these ups and downs of their careers day-to-day (see Frenette & Ocejo, 2019)? When is leaving the arts construed as an affront to one's identity and sense of self versus an embrace of greener pastures? Put differently, future research should link the process of identifying deeply with one's "calling," how artists experience the dilemma to "stay" or "leave," and how this dilemma informs and is shaped by one's identity (Brook & Comunian, 2018; Pitt, 2012).

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