

OUTLOOK 2010

NOTES AND FACTS ABOUT THE FUTURE FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS

“Total employment is expected to increase from 145.6 million in 2004 to 164.5 million in 2014, or by 13 percent. The 18.9 million jobs that will be added by 2014 will not be evenly distributed across major industrial and occupational groups. Changes in consumer demand, technology, and many other factors will contribute to the continually changing employment structure in the U.S. economy.” (*Tomorrow's Jobs*, US Department of Labor; www.bls.gov/oco/oco2003.htm)

The job market in the United States and the rest of the world is changing. The references cited in the documents on this webpage show a gradual shift over the last twenty years in what employers and employees can expect as 2010 approaches. There are five areas of particular relevance to today's students: (1) the world is in the midst of an information explosion which has no end in sight; (2) the educational preparation of many graduates is insufficient to meet the demands of the workplace; (3) to compete effectively in the workplace, students must be able to digest complex material, use that information to solve problems, and communicate their recommendations persuasively and succinctly; (4) corporate involvement in education, particularly in the liberal and language arts, is an enormous investment; and (5) in the United States, the number of students whose primary home language is not English is increasing every year, placing extra demands on an already strained system.

The Marketability of a Liberal Arts Degree

“It is estimated that a worker starting a job today will have around 14 different careers in their lifetime. It is also suggested that 10 of those careers haven't been invented yet. With each change, that person must learn a new skill set or apply their current skills in a different way.” (Michael B. Enzi, Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, Washington, DC, January 6, 2005)

“The skills most valued by employers are best summed up from a survey conducted by the AT&T Foundation. These employers believe that a broad-based education produces students of strong character with generalized intellectual and social skills and a capacity for lifelong learning. Business leaders pointed out that students with a broad liberal arts background are often better able to see things in a new light and make sense of ideas in different contexts. Such students excel at problem solving, critical thinking, and ‘learning to learn.’ They are also better able to communicate in a clear, coherent manner and work cooperatively with diverse individuals in a variety of settings...The ability to communicate-to make sense of and present clearly what appears to others as information chaos across many disciplines-is critical, say business leaders, if one is to advance in a career.” (*Selling Your Liberal Arts Degree to Employers*, Indiana University; www.indiana.edu/~career/fulltime/selling_liberal_arts.html)