

# Comparison Across Major Groups

We have categorized 171 undergraduate majors into the following major groups:

- **Agriculture and Natural Resources**
- **Arts**
- **Biology and Life Science**
- **Business**
- **Communications and Journalism**
- **Computers and Mathematics**
- **Education**
- **Engineering**
- **Health**
- **Humanities and Liberal Arts**
- **Industrial Arts and Consumer Services**
- **Law and Public Policy**
- **Physical Sciences**
- **Psychology and Social Work**
- **Social Science**

The most popular major group is Business, with 25 percent of all students; the least popular are Industrial Arts and Consumer Services and Agriculture and Natural Resources, with 1.6 percent each.

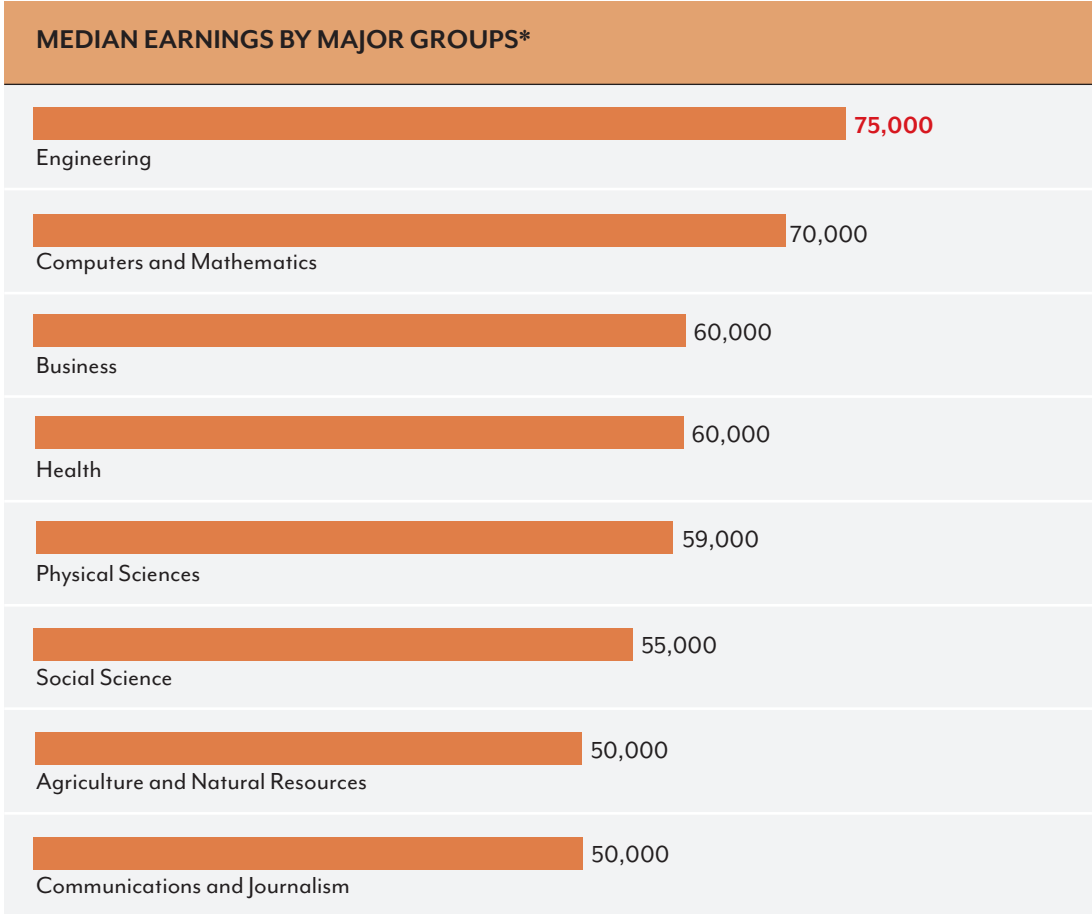
The highest median earnings are found in the Engineering major group (\$75,000), while the lowest are the Education and Psychology and Social Work groups (\$42,000). Women with an undergraduate major in the Social Science group have the largest earnings differentials, making \$18,000 less than men in this category (followed closely by Engineering and Physical Sciences, where women earn \$17,000 less than their male counterparts). There are racial differences, too. For example, the median earnings for Whites with an undergraduate major in Engineering are higher than those for Asians, African-Americans, Other Races, and Hispanics (Whites make \$80,000, Asians make \$72,000, African-Americans make \$60,000, Other Races make \$57,000, and Hispanics make \$56,000). However, in Health, Law and Public Policy, Psychology and Social Work, and Biology and Life Science, Asians make more than Whites.

The major groups that have the greatest concentrations of women are Health (85 percent), Education (77 percent), and Psychology and Social work (74 percent), while the major groups with the highest concentrations of men are Engineering (84 percent) and Agriculture and Natural Resources (70 percent). The major group with the highest concentrations of Whites is Agriculture and Natural Resources (90 percent). The highest concentration of Asians can be found in Computers and Mathematics (16 percent), while the highest concentration of African-Americans is in Law and Public Policy (14 percent). Law and Public Policy also has the highest concentration of Hispanics (10 percent).

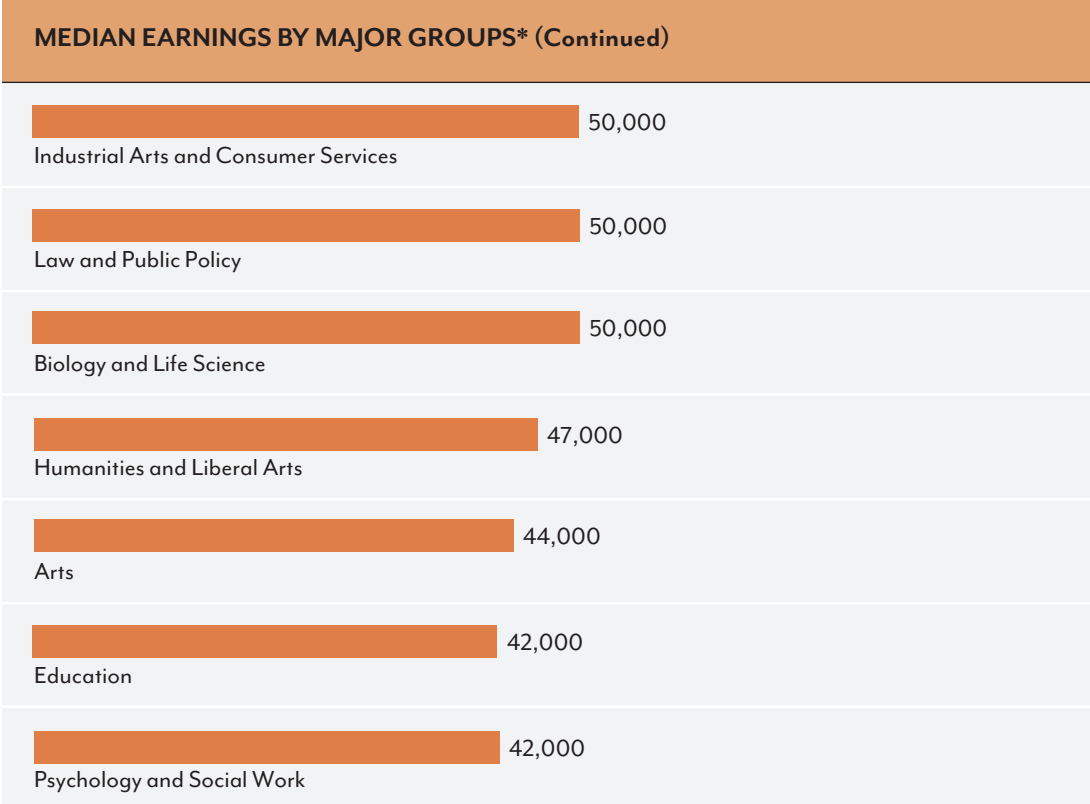
Earnings within these major groups can differ widely. The group with the widest variation is Computers and Mathematics, where the 25th percentile median earnings are \$48,000, and the 75th percentile are \$100,000 (a difference of \$52,000).

The likelihood of obtaining a graduate degree varies significantly by major group. People with an undergraduate major in Biology and Life Science are the most likely to obtain an advanced graduate degree (54% do so), while those in the Communications and Journalism and Industrial Arts and Consumer Services major groups are the least likely (only 20 percent do so), followed closely by Business (21 percent). However, Biology and Life Sciences majors get the largest return to a graduate degree (101%), and Arts majors get the smallest returns (23%).

Engagement with the labor force also varies significantly by major group. Those most likely to work full-time are in Engineering (93 percent) and those most likely to work part time are in the Arts group (24 percent). The likelihood of being unemployed fluctuates by major group as well. Those most likely to be unemployed are in the Arts group (8 percent), while those least likely to be unemployed are in the Health major group (with unemployment of only 2 percent).



\* Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.



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**ALL**

	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Arts	Biology and Life Science	Business	Communications and Journalism	Computers and Mathematics	Education
<b>POPULARITY OF MAJORS<sup>†</sup></b>							
Total Bachelor's	530,888	1,539,384	1,197,003	<b>8,446,263</b>	1,986,030	1,728,959	3,568,392
% of All Majors	1.6	4.6	3.5	<b>25.0</b>	5.9	5.1	10.6
<b>MEDIAN EARNINGS BY MAJOR*</b>							
Median earnings	50,000	44,000	50,000	60,000	50,000	70,000	42,000
<b>EARNINGS AT THE 25TH AND 75TH PERCENTILE*</b>							
Earnings at the 25th percentile	35,000	30,000	35,000	40,000	34,000	48,000	32,000
Earnings at the 75th percentile	75,000	65,000	75,000	90,000	75,000	100,000	55,000
Difference	40,000	35,000	40,000	50,000	41,000	<b>52,000</b>	23,000
<b>PERCENT OBTAINING A GRADUATE DEGREE</b>							
Did not obtain graduate degree (%)	73	77	46	79	<b>80</b>	68	56
Obtain graduate degree (%)	27	23	<b>54</b>	21	20	32	44
<b>EARNINGS BOOST FROM OBTAINING A GRADUATE DEGREE</b>							
% Earnings Boost from Graduate Degree	35	23	<b>101</b>	40	25	31	33
<b>WORK STATUS*</b>							
Full-time (%)	90	76	81	90	82	91	82
Part-time (%)	10	<b>24</b>	19	10	18	9	18
<b>PERCENT EMPLOYED**</b>							
Employed (%)	96	92	95	95	94	94	96

<sup>†</sup> The ACS data are best used to discuss distributional characteristics of the underlying population. However, we also include the number of degree holders to provide the reader with an 'order of magnitude' sense of the number of people with this major.

\* Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.

\*\* Of people in the labor force.

Engineering	Health	Humanities and Liberal Arts	Industrial Arts and Consumer Services	Law and Public Policy	Physical Sciences	Psychology and Social Work	Social Science
<b>POPULARITY OF MAJORS<sup>†</sup></b>							
2,786,488	2,320,732	3,287,782	554,707	768,978	936,633	1,808,669	2,341,689
8.2	6.9	9.7	1.6	2.3	2.8	5.4	6.9
<b>MEDIAN EARNINGS BY MAJOR*</b>							
<b>75,000</b>	60,000	47,000	50,000	50,000	59,000	42,000	55,000
<b>EARNINGS AT THE 25TH AND 75TH PERCENTILE*</b>							
<b>53,000</b>	45,000	32,000	33,000	36,000	38,000	30,000	38,000
<b>102,000</b>	80,000	70,000	75,000	74,000	87,000	62,000	87,000
49,000	35,000	38,000	42,000	38,000	49,000	32,000	49,000
<b>PERCENT OBTAINING A GRADUATE DEGREE</b>							
63	69	59	<b>80</b>	76	52	55	60
37	31	41	20	24	48	45	40
<b>EARNINGS BOOST FROM OBTAINING A GRADUATE DEGREE</b>							
32	50	48	35	45	70	43	57
<b>WORK STATUS*</b>							
<b>93</b>	77	80	84	90	86	79	86
7	23	20	16	10	14	21	14
<b>PERCENT EMPLOYED**</b>							
94	<b>98</b>	93	95	95	95	94	94

<sup>†</sup> The ACS data are best used to discuss distributional characteristics of the underlying population. However, we also include the number of degree holders to provide the reader with an 'order of magnitude' sense of the number of people with this major.

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## GENDER

### GENDER COMPOSITION OF MAJORS

	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Arts	Biology and Life Science	Business	Communications and Journalism	Computers and Mathematics	Education
Percent Female	30	61	55	45	64	31	77
Percent Male	70	39	45	55	36	69	23

### EARNINGS BY GENDER\*

	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Arts	Biology and Life Science	Business	Communications and Journalism	Computers and Mathematics	Education
Female Median Earnings	40,000	40,000	45,000	50,000	44,000	60,000	40,000
Male Median Earnings	55,000	48,000	57,000	66,000	55,000	73,000	48,000
Difference	15,000	8,000	12,000	16,000	11,000	13,000	8,000

\* Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

### RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF MAJORS<sup>Δ</sup>

	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Arts	Biology and Life Science	Business	Communications and Journalism	Computers and Mathematics	Education
% White	90	81	76	76	81	67	82
% African-American	2	5	7	8	8	9	7
% Hispanic	4	7	6	7	6	7	7
% Asian	3	7	11	8	4	16	3
% Other Races and Ethnicities	<0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1

### MEDIAN EARNINGS BY RACE\*

	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Arts	Biology and Life Science	Business	Communications and Journalism	Computers and Mathematics	Education
White Median Earnings	50,000	45,000	51,000	63,000	50,000	73,000	42,000
African-American Median Earnings	36,000	38,000	45,000	47,000	41,000	59,000	42,000
Hispanic Median Earnings	40,000	40,000	40,000	48,000	43,000	55,000	40,000
Asian Median Earnings	43,000	44,000	53,000	51,000	45,000	71,000	37,000
Other Races and Ethnicities Median Earnings	•	•	•	48,000	•	50,000	36,000

\* Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.

• Sample size was too small to be statistically valid.

<sup>Δ</sup> Due to rounding, these may not add to 100 percent.

Engineering	Health	Humanities and Liberal Arts	Industrial Arts and Consumer Services	Law and Public Policy	Physical Sciences	Psychology and Social Work	Social Science
<b>GENDER COMPOSITION OF MAJORS</b>							
16	<b>85</b>	58	35	41	42	74	47
<b>84</b>	15	42	65	59	58	26	53
<b>EARNINGS BY GENDER*</b>							
<b>62,000</b>	60,000	43,000	40,000	42,000	48,000	40,000	46,000
<b>79,000</b>	70,000	50,000	55,000	58,000	65,000	52,000	64,000
17,000	10,000	7,000	15,000	16,000	17,000	12,000	<b>18,000</b>

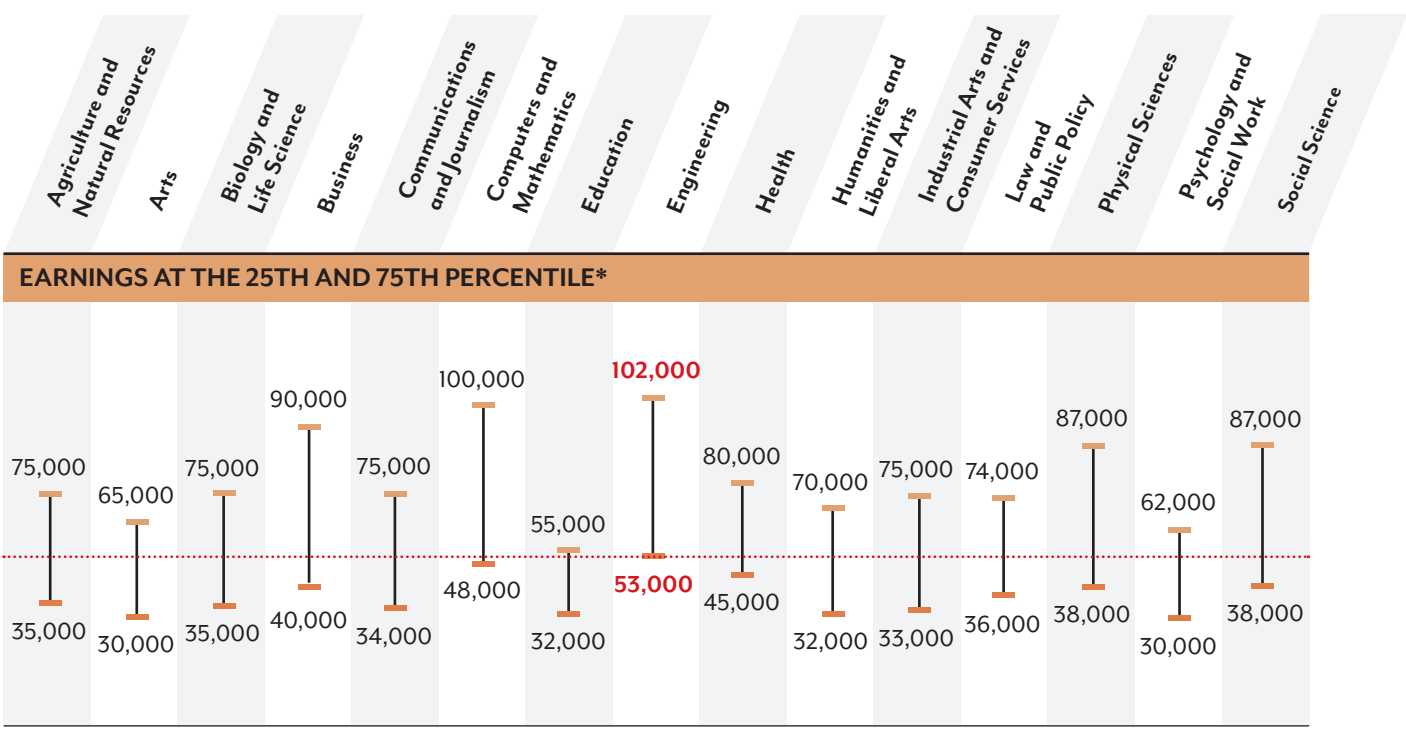
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Engineering	Health	Humanities and Liberal Arts	Industrial Arts and Consumer Services	Law and Public Policy	Physical Sciences	Psychology and Social Work	Social Science
<b>RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF MAJORS<sup>Δ</sup></b>							
71	73	80	83	72	74	76	75
5	9	6	7	<b>14</b>	8	11	9
9	5	6	6	<b>10</b>	6	8	7
14	13	7	3	3	11	5	8
<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>MEDIAN EARNINGS BY RACE*</b>							
<b>80,000</b>	60,000	48,000	50,000	52,000	60,000	44,000	60,000
<b>60,000</b>	55,000	44,000	40,000	42,000	47,000	40,000	44,000
<b>56,000</b>	52,000	42,000	42,000	50,000	44,000	40,000	48,000
<b>72,000</b>	70,000	44,000	45,000	55,000	52,000	48,000	50,000
57,000	<b>60,000</b>	42,000	•	•	•	42,000	45,000

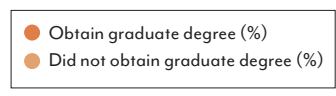
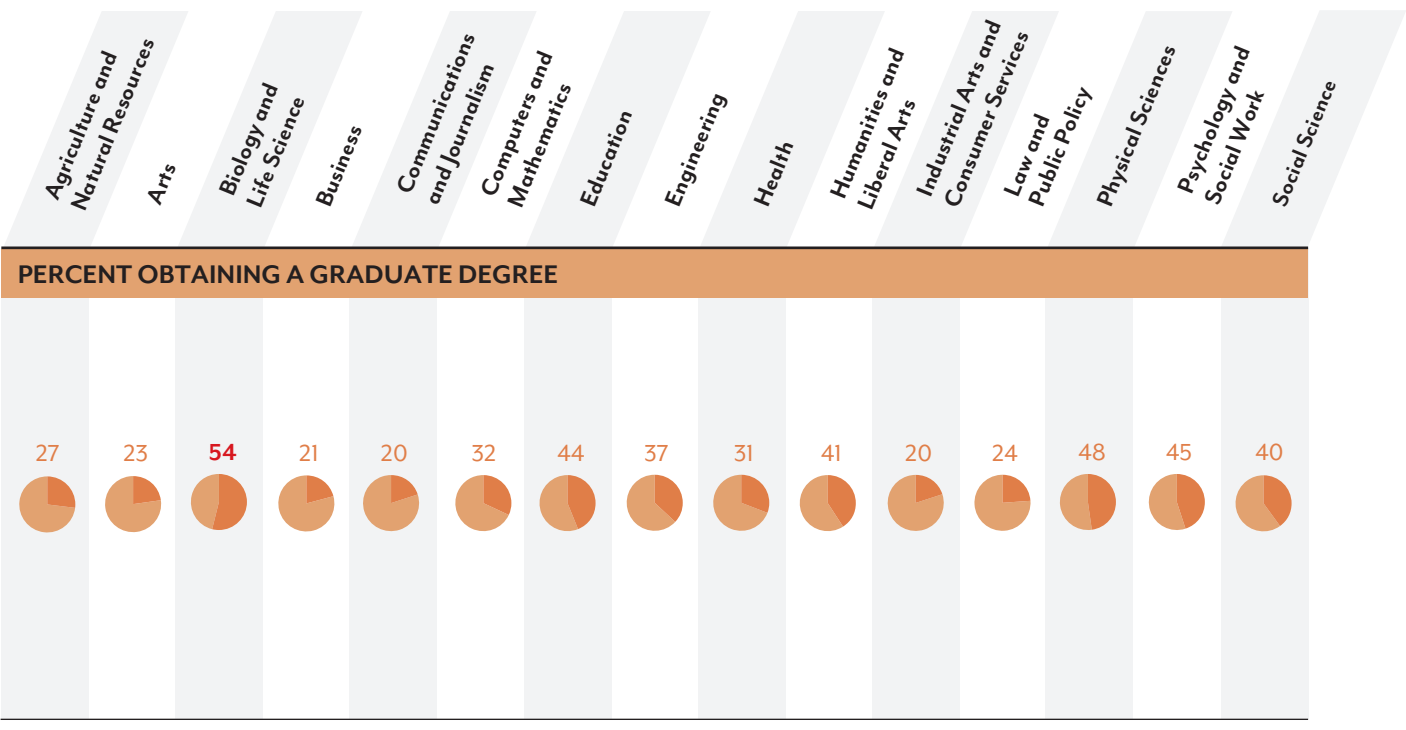
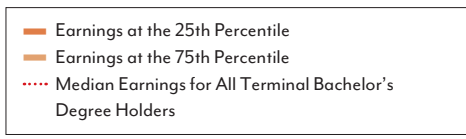
\* Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.

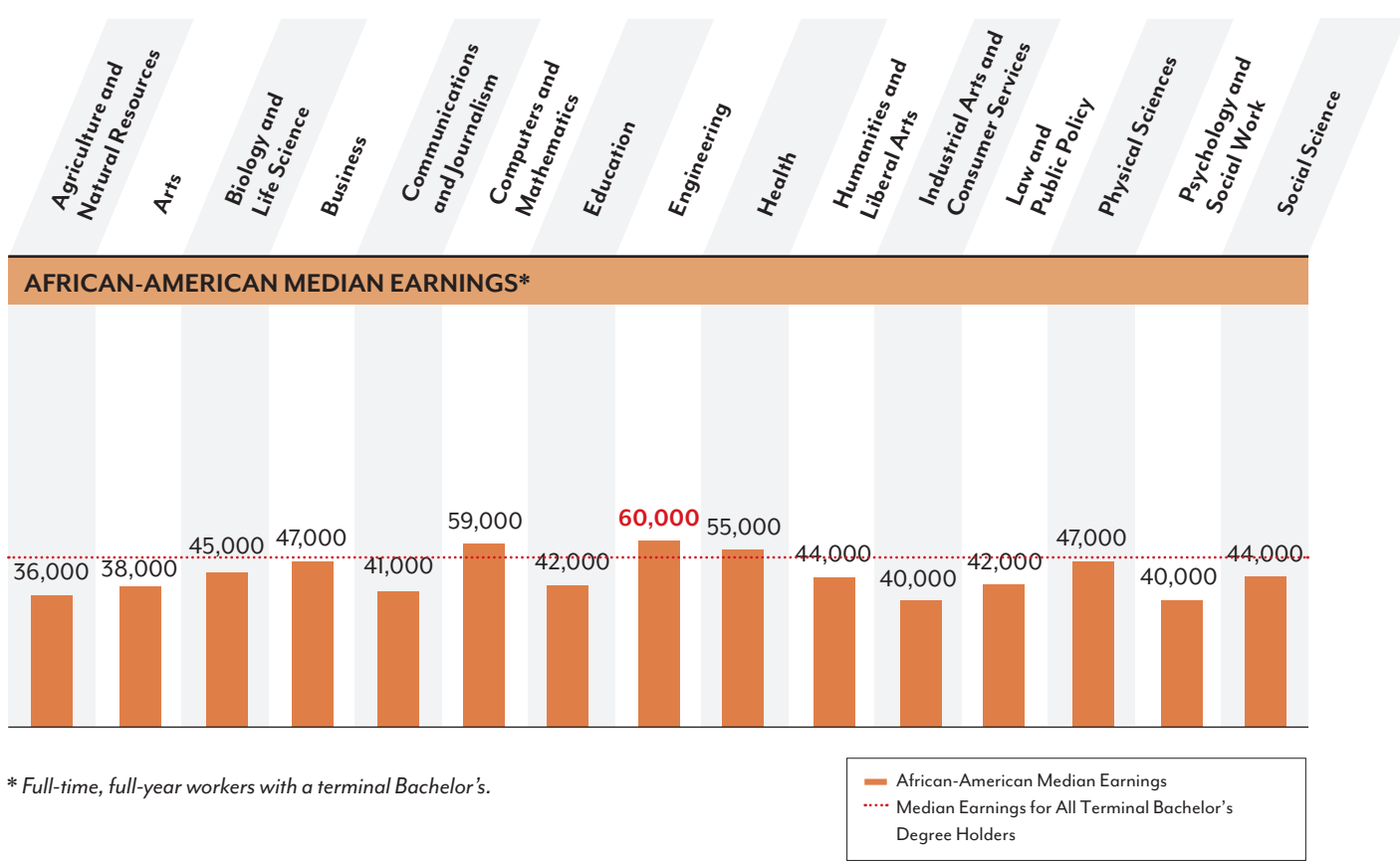
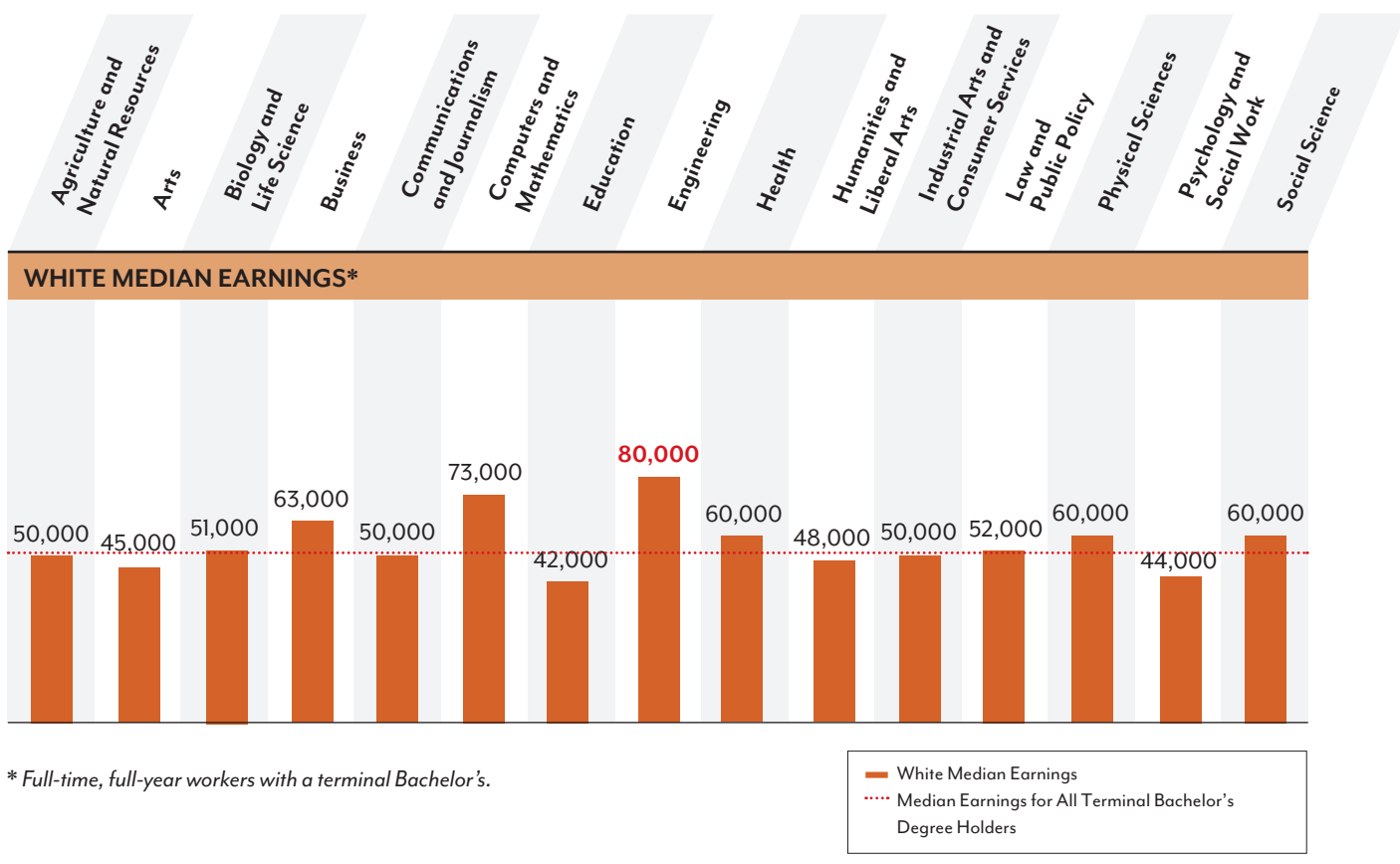
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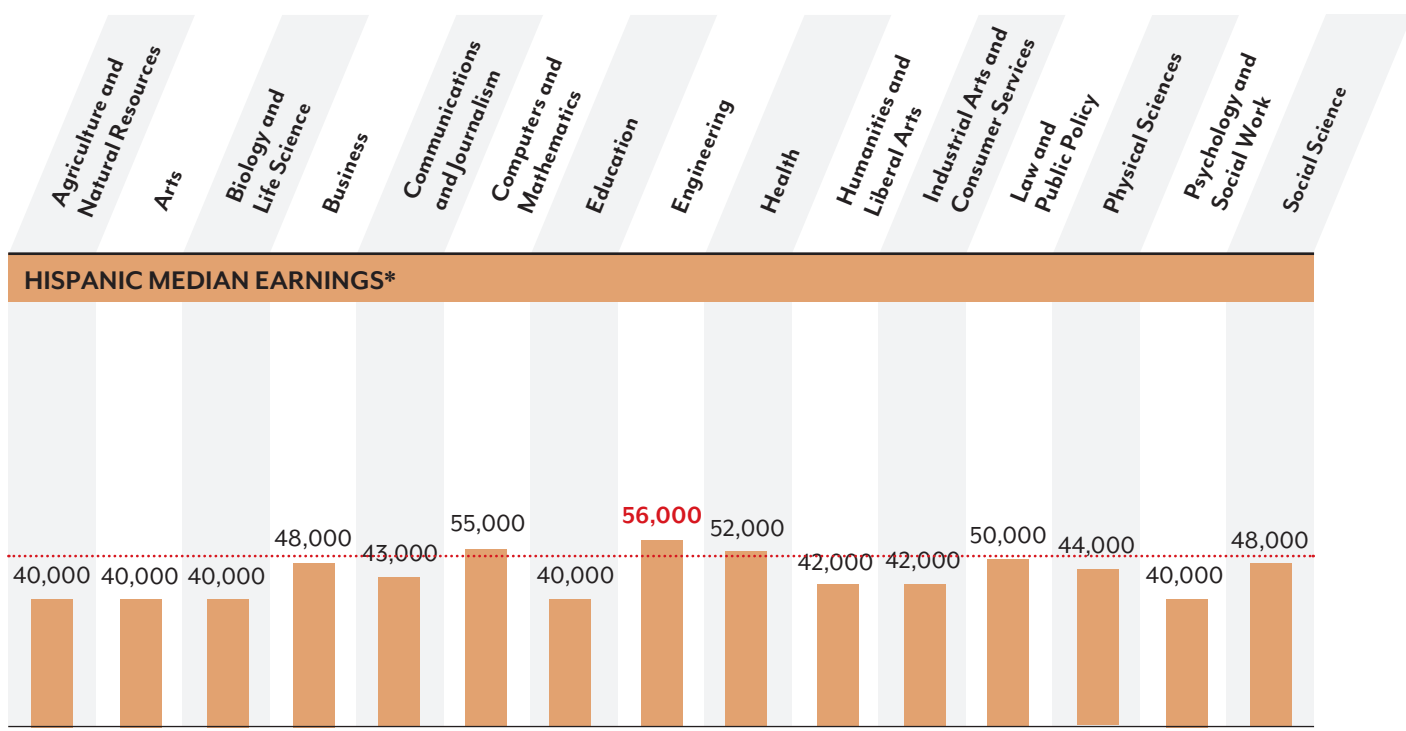
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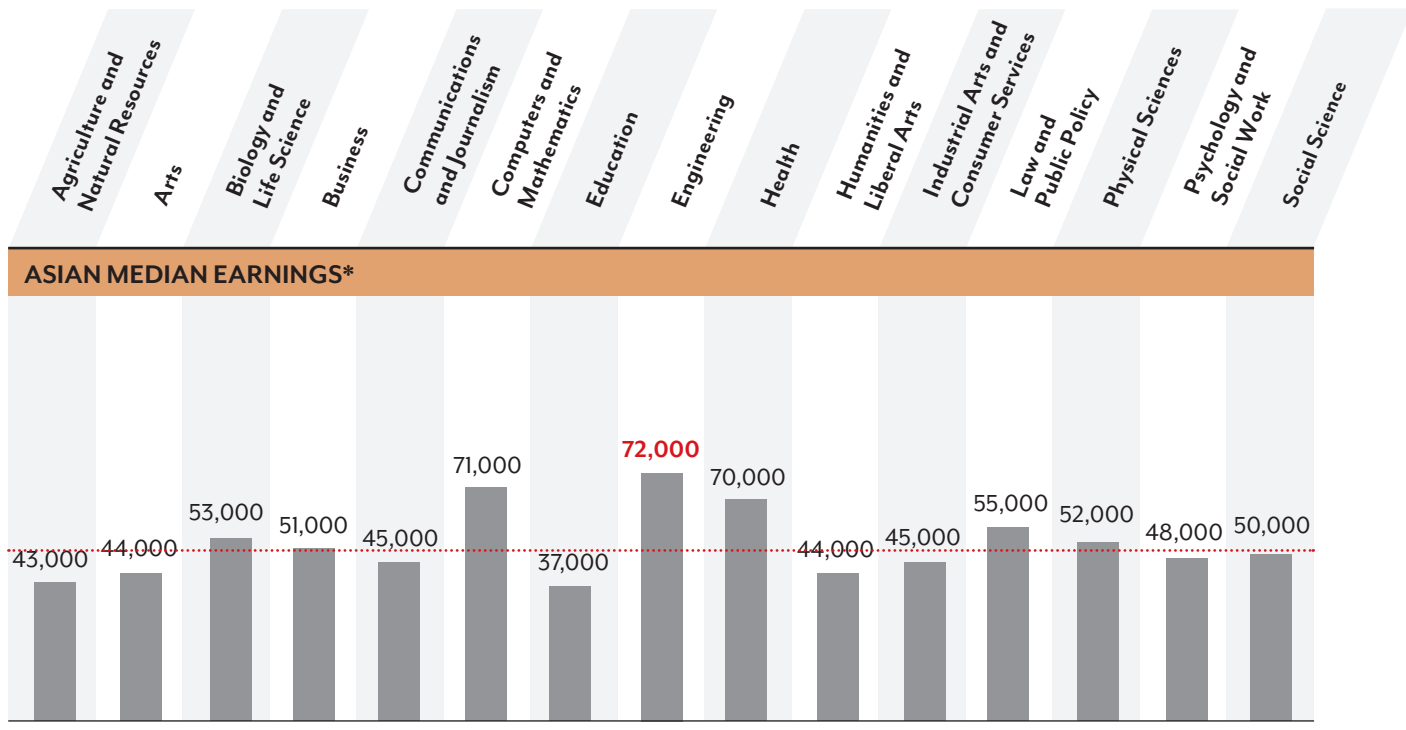
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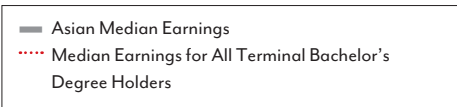


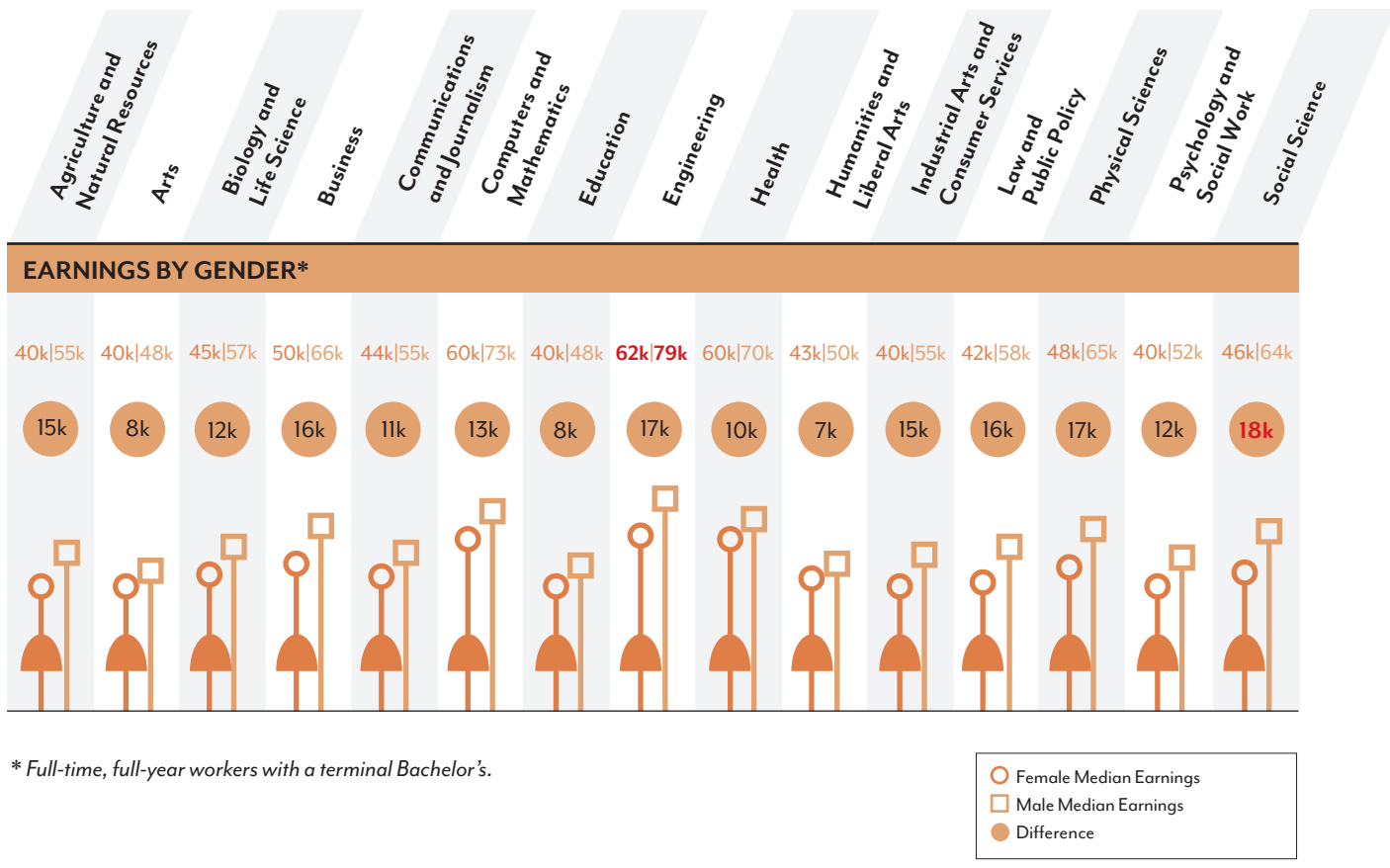
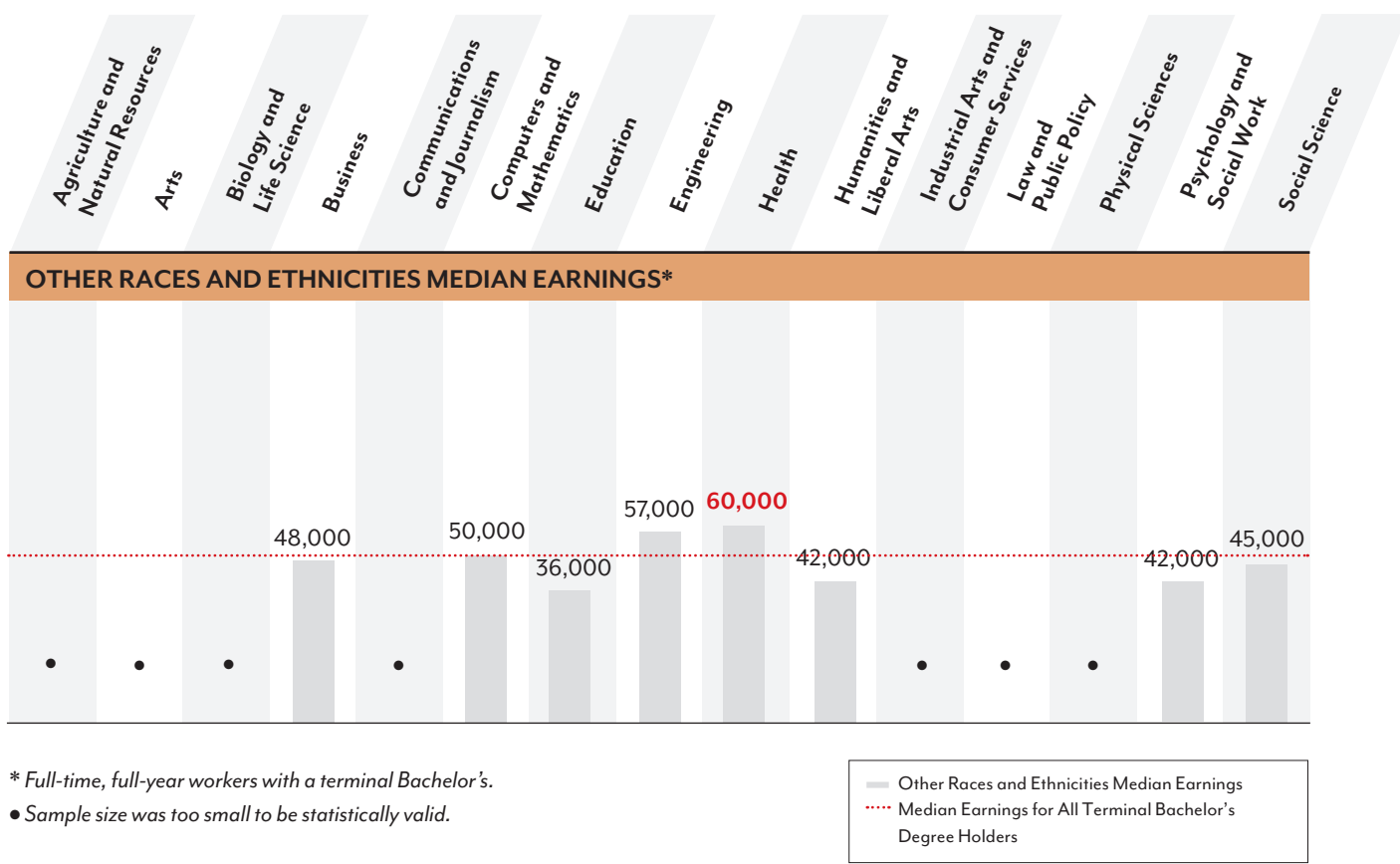


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## WHERE MAJORS END UP BY OCCUPATION\*

	1st Occupation (%)	2nd Occupation (%)	3rd Occupation (%)	4th Occupation (%)	5th Occupation (%)
<b>Agriculture and Natural Resources</b>	MGMT (24)	SALES (15)	LS (8)	OFF (7)	BLDG (4)
<b>Arts</b>	ARTS (25)	MGMT (14)	OFF (12)	SALES (12)	EDU (8)
<b>Biology and Life Science</b>	MGMT (16)	HLTH PROF (15)	LS (12)	SALES (11)	OFF (8)
<b>Business</b>	MGMT (25)	SALES (18)	FIN (18)	OFF (12)	BUS (6)
<b>Communications and Journalism</b>	MGMT (21)	SALES (17)	ARTS (14)	OFF (14)	EDU (7)
<b>Computers and Mathematics</b>	COMP (46)	MGMT (16)	OFF (7)	SALES (6)	BUS (4)
<b>Education</b>	EDU (54)	MGMT (9)	OFF (9)	SALES (6)	BUS (3)
<b>Engineering</b>	ENGR (32)	MGMT (22)	COMP (9)	SALES (7)	ARCH (4)
<b>Health</b>	HLTH PROF (69)	MGMT (8)	OFF (4)	SALES (3)	HLTH SUP (3)
<b>Humanities and Liberal Arts</b>	MGMT (18)	OFF (15)	SALES (14)	EDU (11)	ARTS (6)
<b>Industrial Arts and Consumer Services</b>	MGMT (22)	SALES (12)	EDU (9)	TRAN (8)	OFF (7)
<b>Law and Public Policy</b>	PROT (32)	MGMT (11)	OFF (11)	COMM (9)	SALES (8)
<b>Physical Sciences</b>	MGMT (18)	SALES (11)	LS (10)	HLTH PROF (10)	OFF (8)
<b>Psychology and Social Work</b>	COMM (18)	MGMT (16)	OFF (15)	SALES (11)	EDU (8)
<b>Social Science</b>	MGMT (22)	SALES (16)	OFF (13)	FIN (7)	BUS (6)

\* Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.

### Occupation Abbreviations:

Architecture = ARCH

Arts = ARTS

Blue Collar = BC

Building = BLDG

Business = BUS

Community Service = COMM

Computer Services = COMP

Construction = CON

Education = EDU

Engineering = ENGR

Finance = FIN

Food Service = FOOD

Health Professionals = HLTH PROF

Health Support = HLTH SUP

Installation = INST

Legal = LGL

Life Science = LS

Management = MGMT

Office = OFF

Personal Service = PERS

Production = PROD

Protective Services = PROT

Sales = SALES

Social Science = SS

Transportation = TRAN

## WHERE MAJORS END UP BY INDUSTRY\*

	1st Industry (%)	2nd Industry (%)	3rd Industry (%)	4th Industry (%)	5th Industry (%)
<b>Agriculture and Natural Resources</b>	AG (13)	PUB (11)	RETL (9)	MAN-nd (7)	PROF (7)
<b>Arts</b>	PROF (18)	RETL (12)	EDU (11)	INFO (8)	HS (6)
<b>Biology and Life Science</b>	HS (19)	PROF (14)	EDU (11)	PUB (9)	MAN-nd (8)
<b>Business</b>	FIN (17)	PROF (12)	RETL (10)	MAN-d (8)	PUB (7)
<b>Communications and Journalism</b>	INFO (14)	PROF (13)	EDU (10)	RETL (9)	FIN (9)
<b>Computers and Mathematics</b>	PROF (26)	FIN (12)	MAN-d (11)	INFO (7)	EDU (7)
<b>Education</b>	EDU (55)	HS (9)	RETL (5)	FIN (5)	PUB (4)
<b>Engineering</b>	MAN-d (25)	PROF (22)	CON (9)	MAN-nd (7)	PUB (6)
<b>Health</b>	HS (72)	RETL (6)	EDU (4)	PUB (4)	FIN (3)
<b>Humanities and Liberal Arts</b>	EDU (15)	PROF (11)	FIN (10)	RETL (9)	HS (9)
<b>Industrial Arts and Consumer Services</b>	CON (13)	EDU (12)	TRAN (10)	HS (10)	ARTS (8)
<b>Law and Public Policy</b>	PUB (43)	HS (8)	FIN (7)	PROF (7)	RETL (5)
<b>Physical Sciences</b>	PROF (14)	HS (14)	EDU (10)	MAN-nd (9)	MAN-d (8)
<b>Psychology and Social Work</b>	HS (26)	EDU (12)	PUB (12)	FIN (9)	PROF (7)
<b>Social Science</b>	FIN (16)	PUB (13)	PROF (11)	HS (9)	RETL (8)

\* Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.

### Industry Abbreviations:

Administrative Services = ADMN  
 Agriculture = AG  
 Arts = ARTS  
 Construction = CON  
 Education Services = EDU  
 Financial Services = FIN  
 Food Service = FS  
 Health Services = HS  
 Information = INFO  
 Management Services = MGMT  
 Manufacturing (durable) = MAN-d  
 Manufacturing (non-durable) = MAN-nd

Mining = MNG  
 Other Service = OS  
 Professional Services = PROF  
 Public Administration = PUB  
 Real Estate = RE  
 Retail Trade = RETL  
 Sales = SALES  
 Social Science = SS  
 Transportation = TRAN  
 Utilities = UTIL  
 Wholesale Trade (durable) = WHLS-d  
 Wholesale Trade (non-durable) = WHLS-nd