



DataBrief provides arts educators and arts policy makers with highlights of SNAAP data and insights into the value of arts-school education. Contact us for more information.

Spotlight on Entrepreneurial Skills (Part 1)

This issue of the SNAAP DataBrief draws upon data from 92,113 arts alumni from 153 institutions (140 postsecondary institutions and 13 arts high schools) in the United States.

Entrepreneurial skills are seen as crucial to navigating a career in the 21st century. With the 2015 SNAAP survey, participating institutions can select a module on [Career Skills and Entrepreneurship](#) to append to the core survey. With data from both the core survey and the module, institutions will be better equipped to understand and address differences in alumni needs in their efforts to prepare all graduates for work life.

Register [here](#) for SNAAP 2015.

Entrepreneurial Skills Gap by Major

Although SNAAP data shows that alumni are very satisfied with their education in most respects, some areas require further attention. In particular, alumni from all types of arts majors report an *entrepreneurial skills gap*. As Table 1 shows, relatively few alumni indicate that their institution helped them acquire or develop entrepreneurial skills, yet most claim that entrepreneurial skills are important to perform effectively in their profession or work life.

Major	Percent of alumni indicating institution helped "some" or "very"	Percent of alumni indicating entrepreneurial skills are "very" or "somewhat"	Percentage point differential

	much" to develop entrepreneurial skills	important to profession or work life	(entrepreneurial skills gap)
Architecture	24%	77%	53%
Art History	18%	55%	37%
Arts Administration	63%	64%	1%
Arts Education (Art, Music, Dance, Drama)	23%	62%	39%
Creative and Other Writing	25%	57%	32%
Dance	33%	75%	42%
Design	28%	75%	47%
Fine and Studio Arts (including Photography)	21%	75%	54%
Media Arts	31%	69%	38%
Music History, Composition, and Theory	21%	68%	47%
Music Performance	27%	73%	46%
Theater	32%	72%	40%
Other Arts	35%	69%	34%
Overall	26%	71%	45%

Table 1. Entrepreneurial skills gap, by major.

There is some variation in the entrepreneurial skills gap between majors. Alumni from all majors stress the importance of entrepreneurial skills, though some (such as fine and studio arts, design, dance, and architecture) do so more than others (e.g., art history and creative writing). While there is virtually no gap for arts administration alumni, fine and studio arts as well as architecture majors show the largest disparity (53% and 54%).

Entrepreneurship Skills Gap by Demographics

Compared to differences by major, the entrepreneurial skills gap is strikingly constant across various demographic factors.

Demographics	Percent of alumni indicating institution helped "some" or "very much" to develop entrepreneurial skills	Percent of alumni indicating entrepreneurial skills are important to profession or work life	Percentage point differential (entrepreneurial skills gap)
Gender: Men	27%	74%	47%

Gender: Women	25%	69%	44%
Race: White or Caucasian	25%	71%	45%
Race: Black or African American	31%	74%	43%
Race: Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	27%	75%	48%
Race: Asian	27%	73%	46%
First-generation college graduate	26%	72%	46%
Non-first-generation college graduate	26%	71%	45%
Overall	26%	71%	45%

Table 2. Entrepreneurial skills gap, by gender, race/ethnicity, and parents' level of education.

Overall, men, women, alumni of every race/ethnicity, and first- as well as non-first-generation college graduates all report a considerable discrepancy in the extent to which their institution helped them develop entrepreneurial skills for their work life. It is interesting to note that non-whites are slightly more likely to report that entrepreneurial skills are important to their work than white graduates. Given that inequalities in employment outcomes persist in the arts (see [DataBrief on Uneven Artistic Careers](#)), minorities may feel the need to be more entrepreneurial and work outside of existing structures to create their own opportunities (an upcoming DataBrief will provide additional support for this argument).

Further Data Needed

Through their answers, alumni call for educational institutions to pay closer attention to developing students' entrepreneurial skills. Understanding differences in alumni needs and pathways, by major and by demographic characteristics, is crucial to prepare all graduates for work life. Yet, it should be noted that “entrepreneurial skills” encompasses a set of skills (e.g., idea development, leadership, opportunity recognition).

Data on each of these skills must be teased out in further detail to inform curricular and career development efforts. SNAAP has a plan to do this: In the 2015 SNAAP survey, institutions can select a module on *Career Skills and Entrepreneurship* to append to the core survey; the module will dig more deeply into these questions.

SNAAP 2.0 Has Launched

If you are an arts administrator or faculty member in higher education making tough choices about what programs to invest in or to cut back, you need SNAAP data.

“More and more, I’m being asked to produce credible data that demonstrate our programs are “Returning-On-Investment,” leading to gainful employment, not overburdening students with debt, and graduating self-determining, optimistic, satisfied graduates,” says Douglas Dempster, Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. “SNAAP produces exactly these data.”

Dempster continues, “I’m convinced that SNAAP is the most fine-grained and field-tested discipline-based alumni survey in higher education. And it provides us with our own confidential data, comparison data from peer institutions, and an invaluable national database for our field.”

For more information, view the [Invitation to Participate](#) and contact the SNAAP staff at 812-856-5824 or snaap@indiana.edu.

This month’s DataBrief was written by Alexandre Frenette, Postdoctoral Research Scholar at the Arizona State University Center for the Study of Creative Work.



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