

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU TO STOP MEASURING THE VALUE OF COLLEGE MAJORS

Move would hurt students, families and education leaders, say Georgetown University researchers

(Washington, D.C., December 9, 2014) – The U.S. Census Bureau is proposing eliminating the collection of data on the value of college majors from its annual American Community Survey (ACS). At a time when seven out of 10 high school graduates enroll in college, that move would eliminate the only information that students, parents and educators can rely on to understand the economic benefits of individual college majors, according to researchers at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

All college degrees are valuable but some majors are much more valuable than others. The difference between the highest paying and lowest paying major is \$90,000 in annual salary, a difference that accumulates to more than 4 million dollars over a career according to the Center's previous research.

“At a time when what you take in college determines what you make, the fact that they’re proposing this is difficult to understand,” said Anthony P. Carnevale, the Center’s Director. “This move would be a huge step backward in nationwide efforts to help students make informed choices about what to study in college.”

The ACS’s coverage on college majors has served to inform students, colleges, media and the general public not only on earnings of a particular college major but also on differences in employment rates by major nationwide and in individual states.

“The demand for this kind of information is enormous,” said Jeff Strohl, the Center’s research director. “Every year, college students and their families are making decisions about what to study that will affect them for the rest of their lives.”

The ACS is an annual nationwide survey of 3 million households. Since its launch in 2005, the survey has helped researchers produce findings on college majors which are targeted toward students, career counselors, high schools, colleges, policymakers and community leaders.

The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce is an independent, nonprofit research and policy institute that studies the link between individual goals, education and training curricula, and career pathways. The Center is affiliated with the Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy. For more information, visit:

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