

# Key Findings from 2013 Survey of Employers



- **Innovation a Priority:** 95% of employers say they give hiring preference to college graduates with skills that enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace.
- **It Takes More than a Major:** 93% of employers say that a demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than a candidate's undergraduate major. More than 75% want higher education to place more emphasis on critical thinking, complex problem solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge.
- **Broad Learning is Expected:** 80% of employers agree that, regardless of their major, all college students should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences.
- **Students Need Liberal and Applied Learning:** Employers strongly endorse educational practices that involve students in active, effortful work—practices including collaborative problem solving, research, internships, senior projects, and community engagements.
- **E-Portfolios Would Add Value:** 83% of employers say an electronic portfolio would be useful to indicate that job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

## Employer Priorities and Consensus on College Learning Outcomes

### Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences 80% ■
- Global issues and knowledge about societies and cultures outside the US 78% ■
- Knowledge about science and technology 56% ♦

### Intellectual and Practical Skills

- Critical thinking and analytic reasoning 82% ♦
- Complex problem solving 81% ♦
- Written and oral communication 80% ♦
- Information literacy 72% ♦
- Innovation and creativity 71% ♦
- Teamwork skills in diverse groups 67% ♦
- Quantitative reasoning 55% ♦

### Personal and Social Responsibility

- Problem solving in diverse settings 91% ■
- Ethical issues/public debates important in their field 87% ■
- Civic knowledge, skills, and judgment essential for contributing to the community and to our democratic society 82% ■
- Ethical decision making 64% ♦

### Integrative and Applied Learning

- Direct experiences with community problem solving 86% ■
- Applied knowledge in real-world settings 78% ♦

#### NOTES:

■ indicates percentage of employers who “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” that, “regardless of a student’s chosen field of study,” every student should attain this area of knowledge or skill.

♦ indicates percentage of employers who say they want colleges/universities to “place more emphasis” on this area of knowledge/skill.



**Source:** Hart Research Associates. *It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success* (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2013), [www.aacu.org/leap/public\\_opinion\\_research.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/public_opinion_research.cfm)

