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## Liberal arts majors can — and do — still get tech jobs

By Marie R. Stempinski, Special to the Times

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You're in high school or you're going back to college later in life. You love literature and writing. You enjoy psychology, languages are your passion and history is right up your alley. But everyone says that a college degree in liberal arts means you'll be condemned to minimum wage the rest of your life.

Not necessarily. Choose your college or university wisely, pick a major with both a liberal arts and science, technology, engineering and mathematics emphasis, and you're ready for the future. Thomas Friedman recently updated his bestselling book *The World is Flat?* "I added a whole section on why liberal arts are more important than ever. It's not that I don't think math and science are important. They still are. But more than ever our secret sauce comes from our ability to integrate art, science, music and literature with the hard sciences. That's what produces an iPod revolution or a Google."

Colleges and universities all over the country agree. They're revamping curricula, tying in STEM courses with the "secret sauce" of liberal arts, and coming up with degrees that prepare students for the future.

One example is the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Known as a premier liberal arts institution, William and Mary is also renowned for the scientists it graduates. "It's often mistakenly believed that the liberal arts exclude the sciences. Not so!" said college president W. Taylor Reveley III in a recent alumni magazine article. "Indeed, the title of our Faculty of Arts and Sciences makes that quite explicit.

"Our undergraduates study both 'arts' and 'sciences' in their general education courses, and over 20 percent of them major in the sciences. In fact, among all public institutions in the nation, we rank third in the percentage of our students who earn Ph.Ds in the sciences, not to mention the great success of our graduates in medical school and other health care programs."

Two examples of William and Mary's well-integrated curriculums are neuroscience, and environmental science and policy. Neuroscience students take psychology courses. Environmental science and policy students take natural and physical science courses offered through the Arts and Sciences Department.

The College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida is also melding traditional liberal arts training with technical courses. It offers a master's degree in social media and a master's degree in science/health communication for journalists who want to specialize in covering those growing fields. The university has also instituted a STEM Transitional Communications Program through the College of Journalism and Communications. Headed by Janice L. Krieger, an associate professor of advertising, the program will focus on communicating health and science information.

The trend is growing. More liberal arts institutions and departments are hitching their stars to the STEM wagon. A study by Nobel laureate Thomas R. Cech, president of Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and a distinguished chemistry and biochemistry professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, notes that about 20 percent of scientists elected into the National Academy of Sciences in a recent two-year span come from liberal arts

institutions.

Cech added that "just as mathematics is considered to be a good exercise for the brain even for those who will never use calculus in the future, so the study of great books, history, languages, music and many other nonscience fields is likely to hone a scientist's ability to perceive and interpret the natural world."

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