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The case for residential liberal arts, Part V: Predicting the future of the job market is a "fool's errand"

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Quad 136

The Case for the Liberal Arts, Part v. Predicting the Future of the Job Market is a “Fool’s Errand”

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The Case for the Liberal Arts, Part V: Predicting the Future of the Job Market is a “Fool’s Errand”

A Wharton School professor, writing in the [Wall Street Journal](#) reminds parents and students of the need to think flexibly when making an educational investment for a lifetime. Professor Peter Cappelli writes:

The trend toward specialized, vocational degrees is understandable, with an increasing number of companies grumbling that graduates aren’t coming out of school qualified to work. But guessing about what will be hot tomorrow based on what’s hot today is often a fool’s errand.

The problem is that the job market can change rapidly for unforeseeable reasons. Today, we frequently hear that computers and information technology are and will be the hot fields, but both have gone from boom to bust over time. Students poured into IT programs in the late 1990s, responding to the Silicon Valley boom, only to graduate after 2001 into the tech bust.

Just another reminder that education is for a career not just that first job, and that a broad-based, liberal arts education that emphasizes analytical and communication skills in the context of learning how to teach oneself, is the best possible preparation for an inevitably uncertain future.

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).