

[The Future of the History Major](#)

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The linked piece from *Perspectives* is not going to be news to most of the people on this list. But it does provide some additional context for a set of issues we are all facing.

My institution in a comprehensive college that has an academic division, professional division, and vocational-technical division. Those of us on the academic side have always been under some amount of pressure to translate degrees directly into careers, like our nursing/business and diesel mechanic/auto body colleagues do. For years, I have made what I suspect is the typical pitch for a flexible, professional skill set gained through a liberal arts education. Most history majors do not become historians, but they do go on to use the historical skills they have been trained to use in a wide variety of fields. I have never been convinced that this argument was clearly bought by our good folks doing central advising or the parents of first generation college students (70% of our students fit this category). This article makes me wonder if I should save my breath and move on to other ideas for improving enrollments.

We have made some effort to offer history courses appealing to science or business majors. But have run up against a couple of additional trends, such as very little room for electives since 1. our overall degree requirements are strongly encouraged to be capped at 120 credits so that students can graduate as quickly as possible another and 2. programs like to fill up as much as the 120 cr as possible with their own courses. This leaves us with trying to make the pitch for upper division history as a requirement (or an option) for non-history majors such as Business. And we have had some luck on that front with the Economic faculty. But it is a slow, hard sell. And, I wonder whether it amplifies the trend mentioned in the article of history becoming more of an intro course, with a few upper-division electives.

I am curious as to what kind of solutions other institutions are coming up with for both increasing the number of history majors as well as increasing the number of students in upper division courses.

<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/december-2...>