

Lockwood Review of:

***Raising The Bar Employers' Views On College Learning In The Wake Of The Economic Downturn, A Survey Among Employers***

([http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/2009\\_EmployerSurvey.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/2009_EmployerSurvey.pdf) )

The results of a rather impressive survey conducted on behalf of The Association Of American Colleges And Universities by Hart Research Associates. In this first section, be sure to note that American businesses are calling for analytical, problem-solving, ethical, and communication skills at a rate higher than the demand for science. For that matter, half of the employers call for increasing knowledge of environmental sustainability and human rights:

Employers assess the potential value of emerging educational practices.

*% saying each would help a lot/fair amount to prepare college students for success*

- 84%** Expecting students to complete a significant project before graduation that demonstrates their depth of knowledge in their major AND their acquisition of analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills *(62% help a lot)*
- 73%** Expecting students to work through ethical issues and debates to form their own judgments about the issues at stake *(48%)*
- 65%** Expecting students to acquire hands-on or direct experience with the methods of science so they will understand how scientific judgments are reached *(40%)*
- 50%** Expecting students to take courses that explore big challenges facing society, such as environmental sustainability, public health, or human rights *(28%)*

Next, let's consider the proportion of employers who say colleges should place MORE emphasis than they do today on selected learning outcomes. From this we might raise the question: What does this imply for our ongoing revision of the University Studies Program? And the answer seems strikingly evident: If UW is to meet the needs of the business world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century then critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and ethical decision-making should be at the top of the list—and global perspectives, mathematical skills, and foreign languages should be at the bottom (**skills that are explicitly cultivated via the study of philosophy are in red**).

**TOP 5**

The ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing 89%

**Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills 81%**

The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings through internships or other hands-on experiences 79%

**The ability to analyze and solve complex problems 75%**

**The ability to connect choices and actions to ethical decisions 75%**

**BOTTOM 7**

Global issues and developments and their implications for the future 65%

The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics 63%

The role of the United States in the world 57%

Cultural diversity in America and other countries 57%

Civic knowledge, civic participation, and community engagement 52%

Proficiency in a foreign language 45%

Democratic institutions and values 40%