

Adding Math To Save Humanities

Emory University in Atlanta has created a degree that marries traditionally qualitative disciplines such as anthropology and English with math and statistics. Political economist Cliff Carrubba, who created the program in 2014, said his goal isn't just to better equip students to master large data sets—it is to save the liberal arts.

"There has been an explosion in data and there's a huge demand for people who know how to harness it," he said.

"Most students coming out of the liberal arts have at best a consumer's knowledge of basic statistics, but they're rarely trained to rigorously and effectively answer questions using data." If they can master those skills, they are significantly more valuable in several industries that are being transformed by the data measuring human behavior generated by email, web tracking and cell-phones. Now, schools like Dartmouth and Denison have started similar data programs that join data science with traditional liberal arts curricula.

Data-management skills qualifies those students for

roughly 15% more jobs after college, said Matthew Sigelman, chief executive of Burning Glass, a labor-market analytics firm. Those positions pay a \$13,000 wage premium.

"Ten years ago, marketing was pretty pictures," says Jennifer Harmel, a vice president at Annuitas, an Atlanta company that builds long-term marketing campaigns and has interviewed some of Dr. Carrubba's students for internships. "Today, it's all about numbers and we have a hard time finding people who can understand both the numbers and the softer side of things."

—Douglas Belkin