

Too many college degrees to be competitive?

Students sometimes disclose to me that they are worried about obtaining a job, post college graduation, because of competition...the competition of so many people holding college degrees in a still-recovering labor market (post the 2008 Great Recession). How do I advise them?

Yes, it is true...there is an increasing number of people graduating from college and this has been the trend for a number of years now. This will continue given the available technology to attend college Online. However, this alone should not worry students because there is still plenty of room for those dedicated to success.

Give me a baseball bat and put me in the batting cage. I guarantee that I will miss ten out of ten pitches. Give the same baseball bat to Hank Aaron or Willie Mays, and they will hit ten out of ten pitches...*with the same bat*. The bat is the college degree and only the graduate will determine whether the ball is struck.

...so why didn't I make it to the majors? I wasn't serious enough about baseball. I was rather interested in martial arts, so that is where my youthful effort was focused. I have always been a complete nerd who loved academics, reading, and writing. My effort has previously gone to an undergraduate, graduate, and law degree...and is currently focused on earning a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice (I graduate in August, 2018).

The vast majority of people are 'average wanderlings' that don't appear to have much of a life calling or purpose. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this; however, it yields opportunity for the dedicated to seize opportunities for advancement. What do you plan to do with your college degree? Is it simply to open doors for employment or is the subject matter your passion?

Employers are used to getting swarms of job applications where the vast majority of applicants have the basic qualifications- a college degree, over the age of 21, etc. The key is to separate yourself from the other applicants, and this is accomplished by highlighting where your effort has been directed (and the more years gives greater credibility).

For example: I instruct criminal justice and many of my students have the 'noble cause' mindset where their personalities are based in public service. The students who direct their efforts, while earning their college degree, towards criminal justice tend to secure employment (post-graduation) quickly. I have students who attend their local citizen's police academy, get involved in community policing, and undergo the training to be a certified (and working) Guardian Ad Litem. None of these are paid, yet the students are showing dedication to criminal justice while simultaneously making contacts in their communities. Who would you hire- the graduate with a college degree *or* the graduate with a college degree **and** a demonstrated dedication to criminal justice and the community?