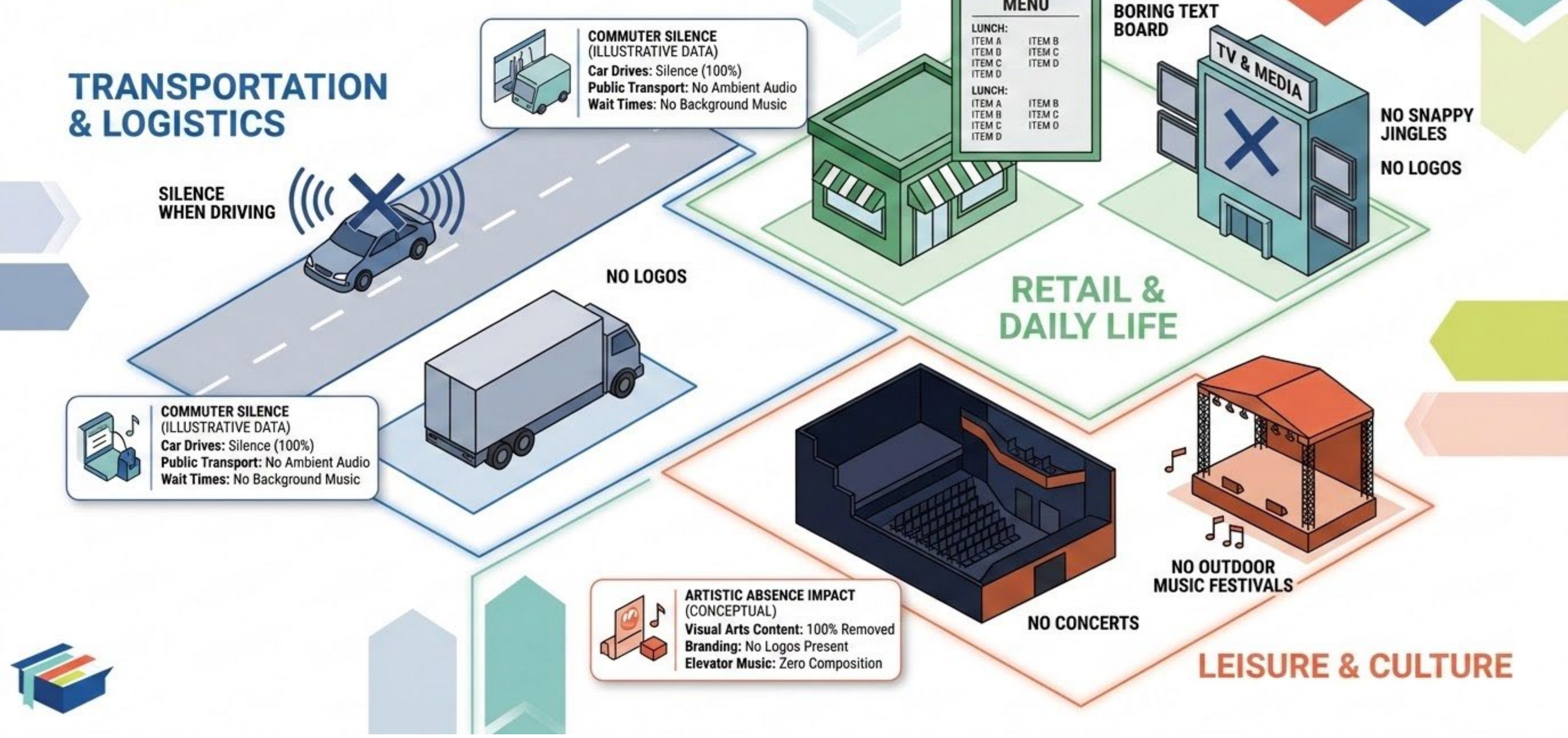
PSEO COALITION

Artists and Musicians Ten Years Out: Long-term earnings outcomes for visual and performing arts graduates using PSEO data

Christopher Peña, Ph.D. and Jason Simon, Ph.D

Using the U.S. Census Bureau Postsecondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) Dataset

Imagine a World



Why This Study?

CURRENT CONVERSATIONS REGARDING VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS GRADUATES (CIP 50)

1-Year Earnings → ROI → Program Decisions

OUR QUESTION REGARDING VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS GRADUATES

1-Year Earnings → 5-Year Earnings → 10-Year Earnings

WHAT CHANGES?

- Most studies stop at Year 1
- Art & Music careers often follow nontraditional pathways
- PSEO lets us examine long-term trajectories

What We Already Knew—and What We Didn't

WHAT THE LITERATURE CONFIRMED	WHAT WE DIDN'T KNOW
One-Year Earnings Frequently Studied	Five- and Ten-Year Trajectories
These Grads Rely on Portfolio Careers	Long-term Earnings Growth and Rates
ROI is Complex for CIP 50 Grads	How PSEO Informs Long-term Program Value

How We Leveraged the PSEO Data?

500+ Institutions

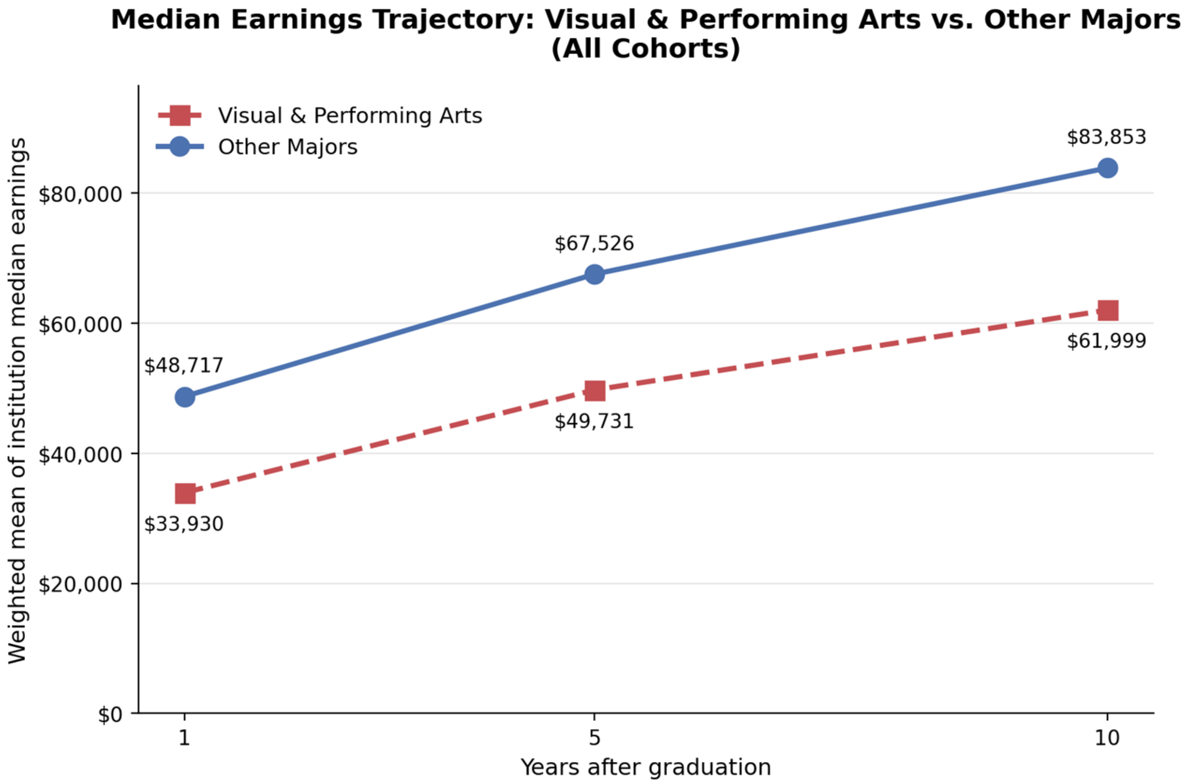
Visual and Performing Arts (CIP 50)

Compared with All Other Bachelor’s Fields

Year-1, Year-5, and Year-10 Outcomes

We analyzed weighted institution-level median earnings using two cohort specifications to ensure the findings were robust.

What We Found



Finding #1

Visual & Performing Arts graduates earned less at every observed time point.

Finding #2

The absolute earnings gap widened over time.

Finding #3

CIP 50 relative earnings growth was comparable —and over ten years slightly exceeded—that of other bachelor's graduates.

We Recognized Methodology Matters

Focus on Weighting	Ensuring Robust Methodology	Understanding Critical Missing Data
Recognizing Data Suppression	Conducting Robustness Testing	Digging Into Distributions

Institutional Researchers must carefully consider the approaches and appropriateness of their work when leveraging these data.

We Recognized Why These Findings Matter

Recognizes Portfolio Careers as Unique

Recognizes & Values a Creative Economy

Reframes Academic Program Review

Bolsters Policy & ROI Decisions

The same data support two very different conclusions depending on whether absolute dollars or percentage growth is emphasized.

Program value should not be reduced to a single earnings measure.

The question is not whether
arts and music graduates earn less.

The question is whether a single earnings metric
is sufficient to judge the value of
an academic program?

Our findings suggest the answer is no.

Thank You

PSEO
COALITION