

# The Most Popular College Majors For America's Billionaires | Forbes - YouTube -- Transcript

## Summary

Nearly half of the nation's wealthiest billionaires studied business, economics, or engineering in college, with business being the most popular major among the Forbes 400 members. Notable individuals like Mark Cuban and Jim McKelvey pursued degrees in these fields, while others like Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates dropped out of college to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. Despite the growth of tech fortunes, computer science wasn't a top major among the richest Americans, with only 17 of the Forbes 400 members studying it. Overall, a variety of majors were represented among the billionaires, with politics and government, and mathematics also being popular choices. Despite the diversity in educational backgrounds, a significant number of the wealthiest individuals did not attend college or dropped out before graduation.

## Bullet Points

- Nearly half of the nation's wealthiest billionaires majored in business, economics, or engineering in college.
- Among the three most popular majors, business was the most common major for the 2021 Forbes 400 members.
- Some billionaires, such as Jim McKelvey, pursued multiple majors to fulfill their ambitions and interests.
- While the majority majored in business, economics, or engineering, a significant number also studied politics, government, or mathematics.
- A bachelor's degree is not a requirement for admission to the Forbes 400, with several members either not attending college or dropping out to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

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Nearly half of the nation's wealthiest billionaires majored in one of three subjects in college. And despite the fast growth of tech fortunes, computer science isn't one of them. Those three majors are business, economics, and engineering, in that order.

Altogether, nearly half of the Forbes 400 members earned bachelor's degrees in just those three fields of study. One of those business students was Mark Cuban, who says he took MBA classes as a freshman at Indiana University until school officials pushed him back to undergrad when they realized he was 18 and had never applied to be there. He eventually graduated with a general business degree.

In all, 65 members of the 2021 Forbes 400 majored in business, while 58 members majored in economics, and 55 members studied engineering. We don't have data on everyone's major or educational background, but we came close, verifying the information of 357 people.

Square co-founder Jim McKelvey initially chose economics because his father, then the dean of the engineering school at Washington University in St. Louis, told him engineers spend a lot of time in labs and that he might find it too solitary. But economics wasn't enough for the super

ambitious McKelvey, who was also drawn to the engineering school. In fact, he earned his second bachelor's degree in computer science, which ranks as the sixth most popular major and was the choice of 17 of the 400 richest Americans.

While business, economics, and engineering were the most popular for these undergraduates, a respectable number majored in other subjects. Politics and government, as well as mathematics rounded out the top six majors with 22 and 18 members respectively.

Of course, a bachelor's degree isn't a requirement for admission to the Forbes 400. 19 list members never attended college, and another 37 dropped out before graduation, often to jumpstart their entrepreneurial journeys. This includes four of the top 20 richest: Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Oracle's Larry Ellison, and Michael Dell, chairman and CEO of Dell Technologies.