Migration of College Graduates

The U.S. Department of Education conducts a Baccalaureate and Beyond survey that tracks the location, employment, and family patterns of college graduates. So far, this longitudinal study has looked at students who obtained their degrees in 1993 and those who obtained their degrees in 2000. The first study surveyed students in April 1993, when they graduated, and again in April 1994 and April 1997. The 2000 class was surveyed in April 2000 and April 2001 and will be surveyed again in April 2004. The survey provides a unique opportunity to track college graduates as they move from state to state.

Among 1993 graduates, 72.4% were still in the state where their degree-granting college was located one year after graduation (1994), and 66.7% were still in the same state as their degree-granting institution four years after graduation (1997). Retention rates in the Fourth District states of Ohio and Kentucky exceeded the national average in both 1994 and 1997: More than ¾ of Ohio graduates still lived in the state in 1994, and just over 73% still lived there in 1997. Kentucky’s retention rate rose during the survey period: In 1994, 80.9% of Kentucky graduates lived in the state; by 1997, that figure had risen to 83.3%, the highest retention rate of any state for which data were available in the 1997 survey.

Respondents in the survey of 2000 graduates seemed more willing to move, within a year of graduation, from the state in which they attended college: In 2001, 69.2% of 2000 grads nationwide were still in the state where their school was located. Although Ohio’s retention rate of 65.1% was below the national mean, it

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Migration of College Graduates (cont.)

More than 1% but less than 3%
More than 3% but less than 7%
Less than 1%

2000 GRADUATES FROM PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGES: LOCATION IN 2001
63.8% of 2000 graduates from Pennsylvania schools remained in Pennsylvania in 2001.

Less than 1%
More than 1% but less than 3%
More than 3% but less than 7%

2000 GRADUATES FROM OHIO COLLEGES: LOCATION IN 2001
65.9% of 2000 graduates from Ohio schools remained in Ohio in 2001.

Less than 1%
More than 1% but less than 3%
More than 3% but less than 5%

2000 COLLEGE GRADUATES LIVING IN OHIO IN 2001: LOCATION OF DEGREE-GRANTING COLLEGE
80.0% of Ohio residents who graduated from college in 2000 attended Ohio colleges.

Less than 1%
More than 1% but less than 3%
More than 3% but less than 4%

2000 COLLEGE GRADUATES LIVING IN PENNSYLVANIA IN 2001: LOCATION OF DEGREE-GRANTING COLLEGE
78.8% of Pennsylvania residents who graduated from college in 2000 attended Pennsylvania colleges.

Less than 1%
More than 1% but less than 2%
More than 3% but less than 3%

NOTE: Data not available for Alaska and Hawaii.

was well within the average range: The middle 25 states had retention rates between 60% and 71%. The Fourth District states of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia were also among the middle 25, with retention rates of 69.0%, 63.4%, and 61.6%, respectively. Five states were able to keep more than four out of every five (80%) graduates they produced in 2000, five others could not keep even half.

In studying the 2001 data, it is important to remember that economic factors unique to the recession may have affected retention rates. Both Ohio and Pennsylvania were net exporters of education in 2001, with Ohio exporting a net of roughly 9,000 graduates, and Pennsylvania exporting about 12,000. A major cause of this phenomenon was undoubtedly the region’s struggling labor markets. A number of critical industries in both states underwent significant job reductions both before and during the recession.

Of students leaving Ohio and Pennsylvania on graduation, a significant number move to California, Florida, and New York. Apart from migrants to those populous states, most graduates tend to move within the region: Ohio grads tend to stay in the Great Lakes region, while Pennsylvania grads who move out of state tend to favor the East Coast. Just as some of the students educated in Ohio and Pennsylvania elect to move out of those states when they graduate, some students graduating from schools in other states choose to move into Ohio and Pennsylvania. In Ohio, the largest share of inmigrating college grads come from Indiana schools, while the largest share of those migrating to Pennsylvania are from Ohio schools.
Migration of College Graduates (cont.)

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