

Going on to Graduate School?

Using National Student Clearinghouse Data to Track Students Who Graduate from UNLV

Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning – November 2008

Overview

This study employs National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data to identify students who enroll in post-baccalaureate, graduate or professional study within two years of earning a bachelors degree at UNLV. The study looks at three years of UNLV graduates: students whose degrees were conferred during the 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 academic years.

The first section below summarizes findings from the NSC data for each of the academic years, with a table showing how many graduates enrolled in further education at four-year and two-year institutions, and how many whose status remains unknown. This section also presents how many enrolled in further study at four-year institutions, broken down by the students' college of undergraduate major.

The second part of the study addresses the question: graduates who subsequently enroll at four-year institutions, where do they go? This section provides information on the institutions and areas of the country where UNLV graduates enroll in post-baccalaureate, graduate and professional study.

Students Enrolling in Further Study within Two Years of Graduation

Data for this study were collected using the National Student Clearinghouse's (NSC) StudentTracker service, which matches supplied student records against a nationwide database of enrollment and degree information from over 3,200 institutions. At the time of data collection, the NSC provided data that indicated a student was enrolled at a given institution during a certain time frame. Since that time, however, the NSC has made new data elements available, which will allow us to track such characteristics as class level, current major, and degree-seeking status in future analyses.

As highlighted in Table 1 below, the data show that approximately 30% of baccalaureate degree recipients enrolled at four-year institutions within two years of graduating from UNLV. Another 5% enrolled at two-year institutions within the same time frame. (This study looks at the first institution attended after graduation.) Additional students enrolled in further education after two years: the earlier the year of graduation, the more students who fall into this category.

Concomitantly, the proportion of students whose status is unknown—cases for which the NSC did not find or disclose enrollment records that matched to a given student—increases the more recent the year of graduation. In some of these cases, the student or the school has blocked the NSC from sharing enrollment data.

Table 1. UNLV Graduates Enrolling in Post-baccalaureate, Graduate or Professional Study
2003-04 to 2005-06

| | 2003-04 Graduates | | 2004-05 Graduates | | 2005-06 Graduates | |
|---|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | (#) | (%) | (#) | (%) | (#) | (%) |
| Enrolled in Further Study within Two Years | 1,077 | 37% | 1,102 | 36% | 1,148 | 35% |
| Enrolled at 4-year Institutions | 929 | 32% | 929 | 30% | 980 | 30% |
| Enrolled at 2-year Institutions | 148 | 5% | 173 | 6% | 168 | 5% |
| Enrolled in Further Study after Two Years | 313 | 11% | 238 | 8% | 141 | 4% |
| Further Enrollment Status Unknown | 1,497 | 52% | 1,738 | 56% | 1,976 | 61% |
| Total | 2,887 | 100% | 3,078 | 100% | 3,265 | 100% |

Notes: 1) Graduates include students who earned a baccalaureate degree at UNLV during the academic year indicated.
2) Academic years span August through May (e.g., 2003-04 includes August 2003, December 2003 and May 2004).
3) Enrollment data reflect the first institution attended after graduation.

Source: Student Information System, National Student Clearinghouse
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The remainder of this study focuses on those who attended four-year institutions within two years of graduating from UNLV—that is, the students represented in the yellow-highlighted row in Table 1, above. On the following page, Chart 1 and Table 2 distribute this group, along with total graduates, by the students’ college of major at UNLV, and present what percentage of graduates from each college enrolled in further study.

On average, more than half of students graduating from UNLV’s College of Education and College of Sciences – as well as those graduating with multiple degrees from different colleges – pursue further study within two years. By comparison, smaller percentages of College of Hotel Administration (11%) and School of Nursing (18%) graduates enroll in further study, presumably because a greater proportion of these students enter the labor market in their chosen field upon graduation.

Chart 1. Percent of UNLV Graduates Enrolling in Further Study within Two Years, by College of Undergraduate Major
2003-04 to 2005-06 (Three-year Average)

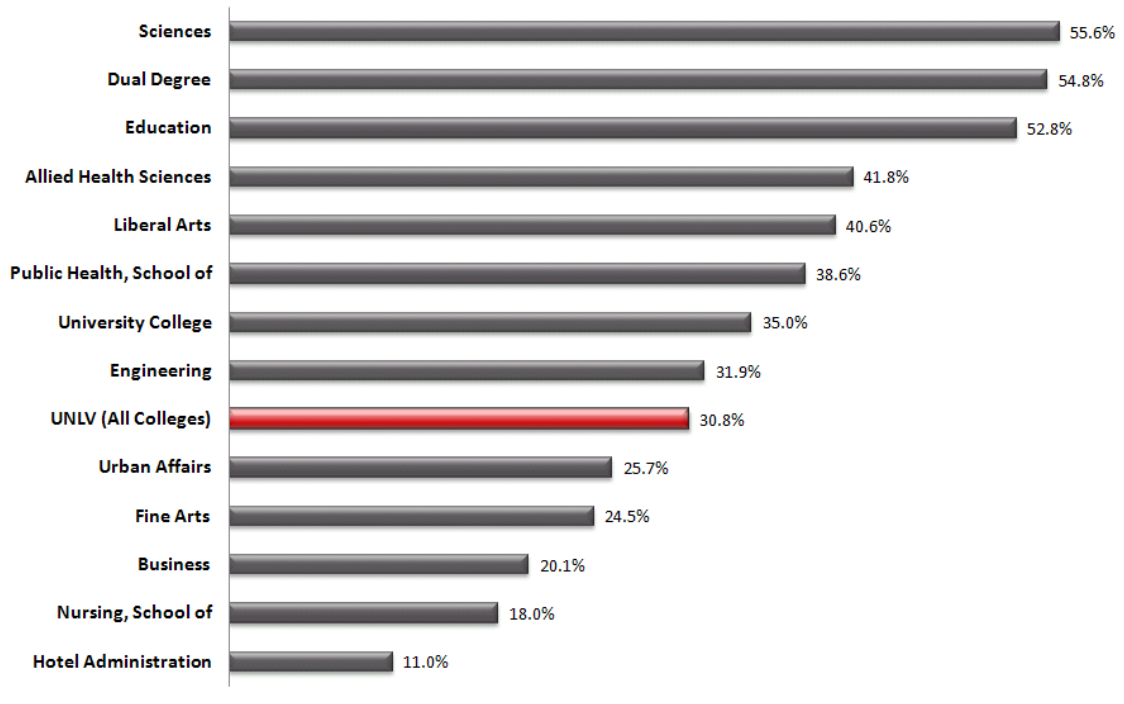


Table 2. UNLV Graduates Enrolling in Further Study, by College of Undergraduate Major
2003-04 to 2005-06

| | 2003-04 | | | 2004-05 | | | 2005-06 | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| | Graduates (#) | Enrolled in Further Study (#) | (%) | Graduates (#) | Enrolled in Further Study (#) | (%) | Graduates (#) | Enrolled in Further Study (#) | (%) |
| Allied Health Sciences | 114 | 43 | 37.7% | 116 | 50 | 43.1% | 148 | 66 | 44.6% |
| Business | 598 | 138 | 23.1% | 609 | 113 | 18.6% | 575 | 107 | 18.6% |
| Education | 453 | 237 | 52.3% | 409 | 237 | 57.9% | 423 | 203 | 48.0% |
| Engineering | 124 | 38 | 30.6% | 116 | 37 | 31.9% | 133 | 44 | 33.1% |
| Fine Arts | 171 | 45 | 26.3% | 225 | 59 | 26.2% | 211 | 44 | 20.9% |
| Hotel Administration | 418 | 52 | 12.4% | 416 | 37 | 8.9% | 371 | 43 | 11.6% |
| Liberal Arts | 411 | 172 | 41.8% | 484 | 189 | 39.0% | 527 | 216 | 41.0% |
| Nursing, School of | 66 | 12 | 18.2% | 120 | 21 | 17.5% | 130 | 24 | 18.5% |
| Public Health, School of | 17 | 5 | 29.4% | 26 | 10 | 38.5% | 25 | 12 | 48.0% |
| Sciences | 97 | 57 | 58.8% | 117 | 62 | 53.0% | 136 | 75 | 55.1% |
| University College | - | - | - | 9 | 4 | 44.4% | 47 | 12 | 25.5% |
| Urban Affairs | 390 | 116 | 29.7% | 418 | 101 | 24.2% | 497 | 115 | 23.1% |
| Dual Degree | 28 | 14 | 50.0% | 13 | 9 | 69.2% | 42 | 19 | 45.2% |
| Total | 2,887 | 929 | 32.2% | 3,078 | 929 | 30.2% | 3,265 | 980 | 30.0% |

Notes: 1) "Enrolled in Further Study" indicates students who enrolled at a four-year institution within two years of earning a bachelors degree at UNLV.

2) Academic years span August through May (e.g., 2003-04 includes August 2003, December 2003 and May 2004).

3) Students who earned multiple degrees within the same college are included in totals for that college. Those who earned multiple degrees across different colleges are shown separately, under the heading, "Dual Degree".

Source: Student Information System, National Student Clearinghouse

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Graduates Enrolling in Further Study at Four-year Institutions: Where do they go?

This section addresses students who enroll in further study at four-year institutions within two years of graduation from UNLV, and attempts to answer the question, where do they enroll? The simple answer to that question: the clear majority, over 60%, enroll here at UNLV, while the remaining students are dispersed across many institutions. The next highest attended institution is the University of Phoenix, at which about 5% of these students enroll. Table 3, below, lists the top institutions attended, and the total number of institutions represented, for each academic year. The NSC data differentiate between UNLV and UNLV Law, which are presented separately here to show the breakdown.

Table 3. Top Institutions Attended by UNLV Graduates
2003-04 to 2005-06

| | 2003-04 Graduates | | 2004-05 Graduates | | 2005-06 Graduates | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | (#) | (% dist.) | (#) | (% dist.) | (#) | (% dist.) |
| UNLV | 592 | 64% | 557 | 60% | 600 | 61% |
| Univ of Phoenix | 56 | 6% | 52 | 6% | 47 | 5% |
| Southern Utah Univ | 40 | 4% | 34 | 4% | 32 | 3% |
| Sierra Nevada College | 8 | 1% | 19 | 2% | 30 | 3% |
| UNLV - Law | 25 | 3% | 32 | 3% | 24 | 2% |
| Touro College - San Francisco | 3 | 0% | 6 | 1% | 19 | 2% |
| Nova Southeastern Univ | 22 | 2% | 12 | 1% | 17 | 2% |
| All Other Institutions | 183 | 20% | 217 | 23% | 211 | 22% |
| Total | 929 | 100% | 929 | 100% | 980 | 100% |
| Total institutions represented | 123 | | 132 | | 133 | |

Notes: 1) Includes students who enrolled at a four-year institution within two years of earning a bachelors degree at UNLV.
2) Academic years span August through May (e.g., 2003-04 includes August 2003, December 2003 and May 2004).

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Of the institutions listed in Table 3, they were likely attended by students who continued to reside in Southern Nevada, and enrolled in online courses or attended a local branch campus. The University of Phoenix and Touro University each have locations in Southern Nevada. Of UNLV graduates who enrolled at the University of Phoenix, most had earned degrees in the College of Education (35%), the College of Liberal Arts (21%) or the College of Business (18%). Touro University, which provides programs in health care and education, attracted students who graduated from the School of Allied Health Sciences and the College of Sciences.

Before they were offered at UNLV as of spring 2007, educational opportunities for Clark County School District teachers provided through the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (RPDP) were offered at Southern Utah University (SUU). Of the 106 students shown in Table 3 as having attended SUU, 103 (97%) had graduated from UNLV's College of Education. Similarly, of those who attended Nova Southeastern University, which offers various online graduate programs in Education, 86% percent had graduated from the College of Education. Sierra Nevada College, which offers online courses toward its M.A. in Teaching, attracted UNLV graduates from a broader spectrum of colleges.

Distance education offerings make it difficult to infer geographical meaning from the NSC data. Top U.S. states of institutions attended by UNLV graduates are presented below in Table 4. However, as suggested above, the state of the institution (*e.g.*, Arizona for the University of Phoenix, Florida for Nova Southeastern University) will in many cases differ from where the student resides.

Table 4. Top States of Institutions Attended by UNLV Graduates

2003-04 to 2005-06

| | 2003-04 Graduates | | 2004-05 Graduates | | 2005-06 Graduates | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | (#) | (% dist.) | (#) | (% dist.) | (#) | (% dist.) |
| Nevada | 642 | 69% | 625 | 67% | 677 | 69% |
| Arizona | 70 | 8% | 71 | 8% | 57 | 6% |
| California | 40 | 4% | 45 | 5% | 48 | 5% |
| Utah | 43 | 5% | 40 | 4% | 39 | 4% |
| Florida | 27 | 3% | 20 | 2% | 22 | 2% |
| Minnesota | 14 | 2% | 12 | 1% | 16 | 2% |
| All Other States | 93 | 10% | 116 | 12% | 121 | 12% |
| Total | 929 | 100% | 929 | 100% | 980 | 100% |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Total states represented | 35 | 38 | 38 |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|

Notes: 1) Includes students who enrolled at a four-year institution within two years of earning a bachelors degree at UNLV.
 2) Academic years span August through May (*e.g.*, 2003-04 includes August 2003, December 2003 and May 2004).

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Despite the limited assumptions we can make about students' geographic location, the NSC data do provide insight toward answering the question, where do they go? The map below offers a sense of the picture in two important regards. First, UNLV graduates enroll in further study in every region of the U.S. Secondly, enrollment appears to be greater in regions closer to Nevada.

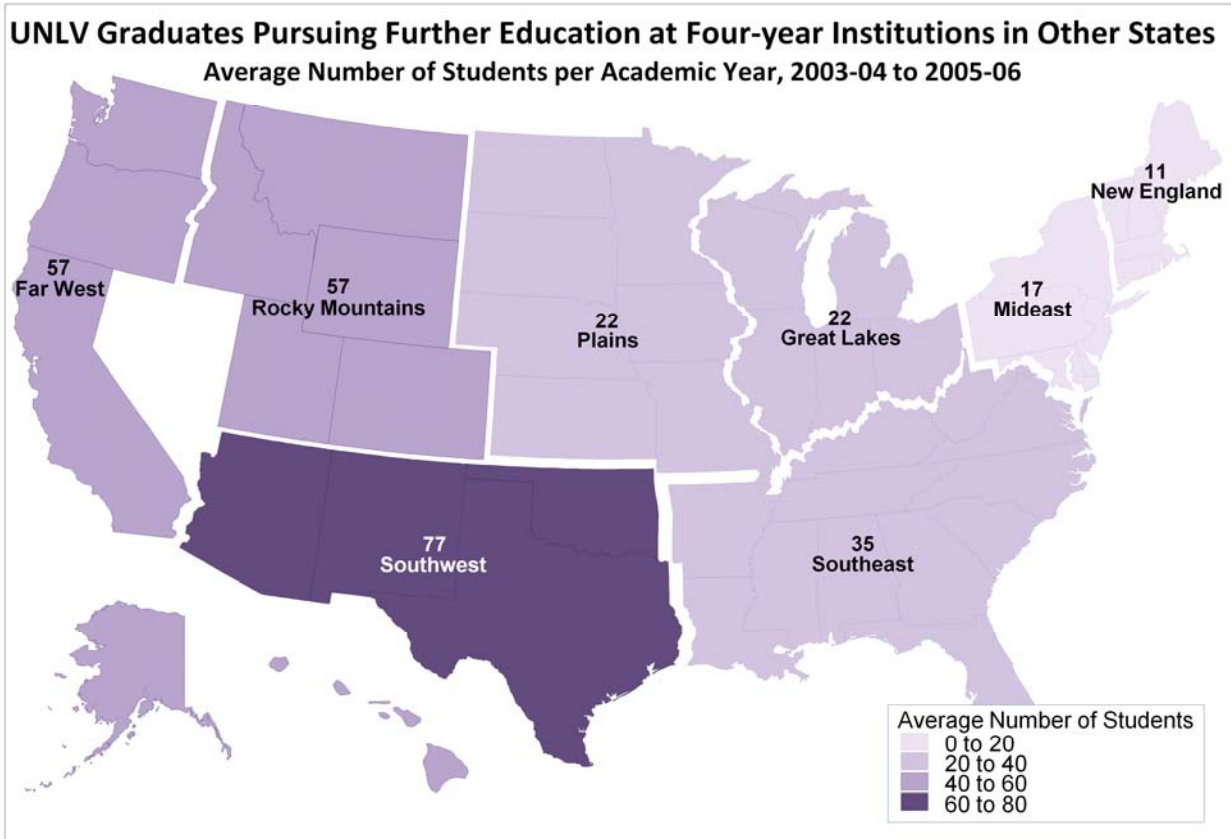


Table 5, below, shows numbers and percentages of UNLV graduates enrolling in further study, by region of the institution attended, for each of the academic years. As NSC data are collected from collegiate institutions within the U.S., we were not able to examine the extent to which UNLV graduates pursue further education in other countries.

Table 5. UNLV Graduates Pursuing Further Education in Other States, by Region
2003-04 to 2005-06

| | 2003-04 Graduates | | 2004-05 Graduates | | 2005-06 Graduates | | Three-year Average | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | (#) | (% dist.) | (#) | (% dist.) | (#) | (% dist.) | (#) | (% dist.) |
| Nevada | 642 | 69% | 625 | 67% | 677 | 69% | 648 | 68% |
| Southwest | 78 | 8% | 84 | 9% | 68 | 7% | 77 | 8% |
| Far West | 48 | 5% | 58 | 6% | 65 | 7% | 57 | 6% |
| Rocky Mountains | 54 | 6% | 60 | 6% | 56 | 6% | 57 | 6% |
| Southeast | 36 | 4% | 33 | 4% | 37 | 4% | 35 | 4% |
| Great Lakes | 22 | 2% | 16 | 2% | 28 | 3% | 22 | 2% |
| Plains | 25 | 3% | 18 | 2% | 22 | 2% | 22 | 2% |
| Midwest | 16 | 2% | 20 | 2% | 16 | 2% | 17 | 2% |
| New England | 8 | 1% | 15 | 2% | 11 | 1% | 11 | 1% |
| Total | 929 | 100% | 929 | 100% | 980 | 100% | 946 | 100% |

Notes: 1) Includes students who enrolled at a four-year institution within two years of earning a bachelors degree at UNLV.
 2) Academic years span August through May (e.g., 2003-04 includes August 2003, December 2003 and May 2004).
 3) The Far West region includes Alaska and Hawai'i.

Source: Student Information System, National Student Clearinghouse
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Conclusions

Of students who earn a baccalaureate degree at UNLV, roughly 30% pursue post-baccalaureate, graduate and professional study at a four-year institution within two years. Of these graduates pursuing further education, over 60% do so here at UNLV, while the remaining students attend a wide range of institutions across the U.S. The rate at which UNLV graduates enroll in further study varies, in some cases considerably, by the college of undergraduate major. The nature of NSC geographical data and the availability of distance education programs limit the extent to which we can generalize about where our graduates pursue study. However, findings suggest that, while many of our graduates choose to continue their studies at UNLV, a good number of local students choose to pursue further study at other institutions.