

# Mobility and Employment of Michigan's Millennial Talent

## Survey of Recent University Graduates, May 2013

Economic growth of regions, states, and countries is related to the educational attainment of the workforce. Research has shown that educational attainment explains nearly 60% of a community's economic success, while improving graduation rates could add \$120 billion to incomes across the United States.<sup>1</sup> Over their career, a worker with a bachelor's degree has the potential to earn nearly two times that of an average high school graduate.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, outmigration of recent college graduates – commonly referred to as “brain drain” – continues to be a concern for many states and countries, Michigan among them. Sustained losses of college graduates reduce the economic growth rate and have long-term consequences for income distribution and social service needs.<sup>3</sup>

In 2010, it was estimated that nearly half of the 300,000 recent public university graduates in Michigan would not remain in the state.<sup>4</sup> The state's 15 public universities have conferred more than 60,000 degrees over each of the past 5 years with increases each year (figure 1),<sup>5</sup> and almost one-third of those degrees are in critical skill areas such as medicine, engineering, mathematics, technology, and other sciences.<sup>6</sup> Michigan is clearly educating talent, and the focus becomes how to retain talent in the state.

Year	Degrees Conferred
2007-08	62,413
2008-09	62,973
2009-10	63,564
2010-11	65,161
2011-12	66,207

Figure 1: Combined degrees conferred by Michigan's 15 public universities.

In response to the need to understand more about the young talent of the State of Michigan, a study was convened by the Detroit Regional Chamber with funding support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation; Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan; and the Michigan Municipal League. Between January and March 2013, iLabs, the University of Michigan-Dearborn's Center for Innovation Research, examined the attitudes and actions of the May 2012 graduates of the 15 public universities in Michigan. Of particular interest: Whether recent graduates remained in Michigan or moved away following their graduation. Within that, the study examined the differences between those who moved and those who stayed, including their career decisions, their perceptions of “place” in their mobility decision, their interest in further education, and demographic information. iLabs researchers surveyed 7,054 recent alumni of the 15 public universities in Michigan who graduated in May 2012. This was done in collaboration with the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan coordinating emails to these recent alumni. Just over 41,000 emails were sent, for a 17% completed response rate and a margin of error of 1.1%. The surveys were in the field between late January and early March 2013.

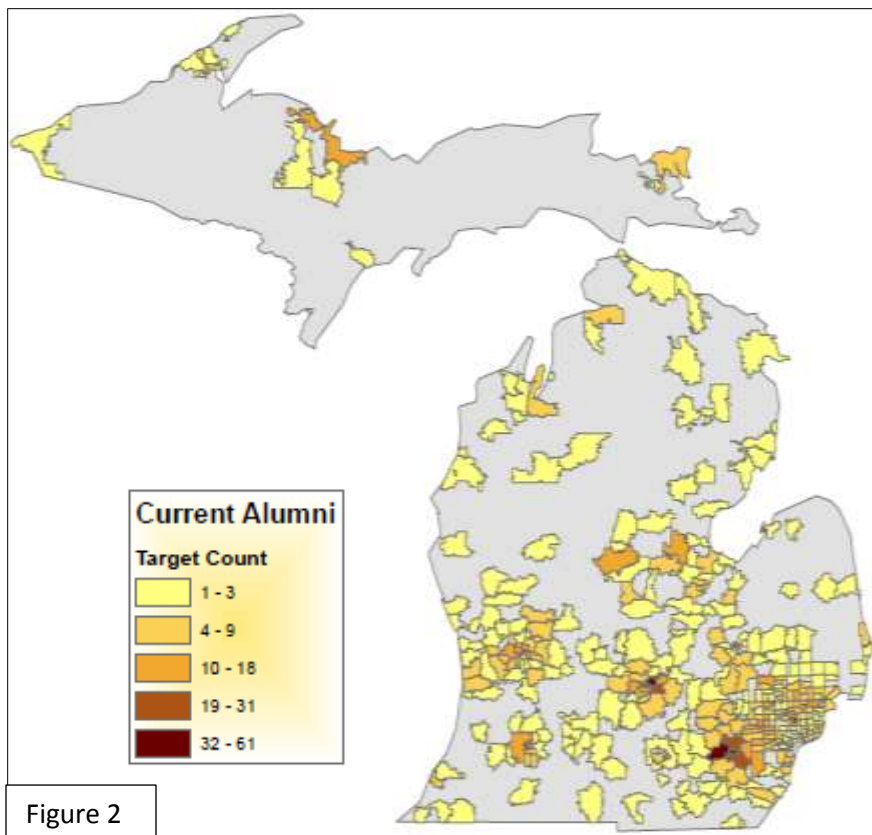


Figure 2

## Young Mobile Talent

Recognizing that certain factors impact a person’s mobility, the full sample was sorted based on several demographic factors. The target group is defined as single, 28 years of age or younger, not currently pursuing another degree, and attended high school in the United States. The assumption is that those who meet all four of the criteria have fewer constraints when they consider where to live after graduation and they represent 42% of the total sample (or 2,979 recent alumni). They are the focus of the remainder of this report and are referred to as “young mobile talent.”

### Current Location

Within the young mobile talent group, 63% are still living in Michigan, while 37% have left the state. In a similar study done in 2007, 51% of the young mobile talent group indicated they were living in Michigan approximately six months after graduation. The map in figure 2 shows that the young mobile talent group is spread across the State of Michigan, but the most common communities they are now calling home are the urban areas within the southern half of the Lower Peninsula. Almost one-fifth (19%) of those living in Michigan indicate their current zip code is in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, or Lansing (figure 3).

Looking nationally, 35% of the young mobile talent moved elsewhere in the United States, while less than 2% moved to another country. Three-quarters (76%) live in the Midwest – Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, or Wisconsin. Illinois, California, and New York are home to 38% of those who left Michigan (figure 4); however, the young mobile talent lives in 49 of the 50 states, with only Rhode Island not having a respondent in the survey.

City	Percentage
Ann Arbor	8.6%
Grand Rapids	6.2%
Lansing	4.3%
Detroit	3.6%
East Lansing	3.5%
Kalamazoo	3.5%
Royal Oak	3.0%
Sterling Heights	2.0%
Troy	2.0%

Figure 3: Current residence and percentage within Michigan

State	Percentage
Illinois	18.7%
California	10.2%
New York	9.1%
Texas	4.5%
Wisconsin	4.4%
Ohio	3.8%
Washington DC	3.8%
Florida	3.8%
Washington	3.4%

Figure 4: Current residence and percentage within those who left Michigan

It is worth noting that 83% of the young mobile talent group indicated that their high school was in Michigan – a proxy for being from the state when they entered college. Of those who went to high school in Michigan, 71% of them still live in the state. Of those who went to high school outside of Michigan, 22% of them still live in Michigan. Therefore, Michigan is retaining nearly three-quarters of the young mobile talent who grew up here, and seeing “brain gain” of nearly a quarter of those who grew up elsewhere.

### Employment and Income

Comparing location and employment, the young mobile talent living in Michigan are less likely to be employed full-time, as compared to those who live in another state. Less than 70% of those in Michigan have full-time employment, while almost 90% of those who live elsewhere in the United States have full-time employment (figure 5). When asked about their full-time employment, less than half (48%) of those who reside in Michigan indicate the job will continue as a long-term career and 11% say it is not linked to their career goals.

You are currently employed:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
Full-time	68%	86%
Part-time	22%	8%
Not employed	10%	6%

Figure 5: Employment status by current residence

Comparatively, 55% of those residing elsewhere in the US indicate that the job will continue as a long-term career and 5% say the job is not linked to their career goals. Of those with full-time employment, 40% found the job in college or right out of college. Another 29% found the job within the first 3 months of graduation.

Among those employed full-time, incomes for the young mobile talent living in Michigan are lower than those living elsewhere in the United States. More than a third (35%) of those in Michigan have annual incomes under \$30,000,

while 16% of those living elsewhere in the United States have incomes under \$30,000. Correspondingly, 33% of those residing in Michigan have incomes between \$45,000 and \$100,000, while 53% of those living elsewhere in the US have incomes in that range (figure 6).

While the industries of those employed full-time are varied, 10% of those residing in Michigan are in the automotive industry; 1% of those residing elsewhere are employed in automotive. The medical and healthcare industry has 16% of those residing in Michigan, and 11% of those residing elsewhere. Industries where larger percentages of those residing elsewhere are employed are consulting, 6%; engineering services, 5%; and software design, 4%. For those residing in Michigan, those industries only account for 2%, 3%, and 1% of the sample, respectively.

What is your current annual income:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
\$30,000 or less	35%	16%
\$30,001-\$45,000	31%	26%
\$45,001-\$60,000	23%	29%
\$60,001-\$100,000	10%	24%
More than \$100,000	1%	5%

Figure 6: Income by current residence – full-time only

Based on degree, Michigan is losing engineering talent: 13% of those residing in Michigan earned an engineering degree and 22% of those residing elsewhere in the US earned an engineering degree. This means Michigan is retaining fewer than half (47%) of its engineering graduates. For those with a business degree, 18% of those residing in Michigan earned a business degree, while 20% of those residing elsewhere in the US earned a business degree. This is more pronounced at the undergraduate level than the graduate level, with Michigan retaining 56% of its undergraduate business students and 64% of its graduate business students. While smaller portions of the sample, those with degrees in education, health, natural sciences, and mathematics are more likely to be residing in Michigan than elsewhere in the US.

Of those who reside elsewhere in the US, 43% agreed they sought employment in Michigan before leaving. Additionally, 38% agreed they would have stayed in Michigan, but were unable to find the type of job they wanted. Half (47%) of the young mobile talent who reside in Michigan agree they sought employment outside of Michigan.

### Motivations for Leaving or Staying

The young mobile talent were asked a series of questions about factors that influenced them to stay in or leave Michigan. When comparing the responses of those who reside in Michigan with those who reside elsewhere, issues of career and employment are related to young mobile talent leaving Michigan. A larger percentage agree they left Michigan for reasons such as career opportunities, finding a job they wanted, that they were transferred out of the state by their employer, that they wanted to work for a specific employer, or for pay and benefits (figure 7).

Why did you stay in/leave Michigan:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
Career opportunities	43%	85%
Found a job they wanted	54%	71%
Transferred by their employer	3%	19%
To work for a specific employer	28%	50%
Pay and benefits	26%	44%

Figure 7: Career-related factors for staying or leaving, percent agree

Issues of family and place are related to young mobile talent remaining in Michigan. A larger percentage agree they stayed in Michigan for reasons such as living near family and friends, thinking of Michigan as home, recreational activities, physical attributes, and the cost of living (figure 8).

Why did you stay in/leave Michigan:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
Live closer to family or friends	74%	25%
Michigan is (or is not) their home	75%	26%
Recreational activities	43%	33%
Physical attributes	37%	23%
Cost of living	43%	13%

Figure 8: Family and place-related factors for staying or leaving, percent agree

Issues related to urban lifestyle are related to young mobile talent leaving Michigan. A larger percentage agree they left Michigan for such reasons as urban experiences and public transportation. Two areas where there were little differences between those living in Michigan and those living elsewhere were climate and cultural and social life (figure 9). It is worth noting that 57% of the young mobile talent indicate they would like to live in an urban area – with 22% preferring to live in a city with a population over 500,000 (large city), and 35% preferring to live in a city with a population of 100,000 to 500,000 (smaller city). For those residing in Michigan, 15% prefer large cities and 36% prefer smaller cities. For those who reside elsewhere in the US, 34% prefer large cities and 32% prefer smaller cities.

Why did you stay in/leave Michigan:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
Urban experiences	18%	38%
Public transportation	6%	23%
Climate	27%	25%
Cultural/social life	41%	39%

Figure 9: Urban and place-related factors for staying or leaving, percent agree

Of the young mobile talent group, males and those who received a master’s degree are more likely to reside elsewhere in the US. Additionally, as compared with those who reside in Michigan, those who reside elsewhere in the US are more likely to have parents with at least a college degree and have a lower grade point average. Those who reside elsewhere in the US are more likely to believe their future career plans include being an entrepreneur or owning a business. While the average college debt is the same for both those residing in Michigan and elsewhere, 41% of those residing elsewhere in the US indicate they have no student loan debt, while 33% of those residing in Michigan say they have no student loan debt.

### Unemployment and Underemployment

A quarter (26%) of the young mobile talent are not employed or are employed part-time. When compared to those employed full-time, the unemployed and underemployed were less likely to have had an internship and less likely to say they had relevant work experience prior to graduation. However, the overall amount of work experience is similar between those employed and those who are unemployed or underemployed.

Why are you currently not employed/employed part-time?	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
Unable to find employment in desired career field	66%	63%
Unable to find a full-time job (employed part-time only)	61%	60%
Unable to find employment where you want to live	52%	40%
Unable to find any job (not employed only)	47%	33%
Family responsibilities	11%	9%

Figure 10: Unemployment based on residence, percent agree

Those who are unemployed or underemployed were asked a series of questions about why they are not employed full-time. The inability to find a job in their desired career field was the most common reason provided by both those residing in Michigan and those residing elsewhere in the US. For those residing in Michigan, half (52%) are unable to find a job where they want to live, as compared to 40% of those living elsewhere in the US. Almost half (47%) of those not employed and residing in Michigan say they are unable to find any job. A third (33%) of those not employed and residing elsewhere in the US agree they are unable to find any job (figure 10).

Thinking about how you will look for your next job, you will look for:	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
A job in a place you would like to live	85%	89%
A job in the place you currently live	58%	54%
The best job, regardless of location	56%	55%

Figure 11: Looking for next job, percent agree

### Next Moves and Michigan

Irrespective of where they live now, young mobile talent share similar ideas of how they will

look for their next job. While almost 90% will look for a job in a place they would like to live, more than half will look where they currently live and look for the best job regardless of location. The differences between those residing in Michigan and those residing elsewhere in the US are minimal (figure 11). While a majority said they would look in a place they want to live, 86% said they would relocate if the right career opportunity presented itself.

Several questions were asked about the young mobile talent’s views on the state of Michigan. Of the total, 44% agreed that they intended to live in Michigan after earning their degree. However, 52% of those residing in Michigan agreed with this statement, but 23% of those residing elsewhere in the US agreed with the statement. Similarly, those residing in Michigan were more likely to agree (47%) that they would like to spend their life in Michigan, as compared to those residing elsewhere in the US (38%). Both of the above questions had more than 20% select neutral as their response. Of the total, 55% agreed that Michigan has great communities to start a post-college life, with those residing in Michigan being more favorable (figure 12).

Views of Michigan	Reside in Michigan	Reside elsewhere in US
You intended to live in Michigan after earning your degree	52%	23%
All things being equal, you would like to spend your life in Michigan	47%	38%
Michigan has communities that are great places for young people to start their post-college lives	59%	49%

Figure 12: Perceptions of Michigan, percent agree

### Additional Analysis

In addition to the basic frequency information presented above, the data was examined using a variety of research techniques to better understand the responses of the alumni and the relationships among various factors in their mobility decisions.

### Binary Logistic Regression

A binary logistic regression model was used to identify the variables which predict if a member of the young mobile talent group would reside in Michigan or elsewhere, and the odds they would do so. As part of the analysis, a factor analysis collapsed multiple questions (variables) into single factors. For example, “Career” factors include the questions found in table 7. “Environmental” factors include the questions found in table 9 as well as recreational activities and physical attributes found in table 8. “Home” factors include the first two statements from table 8. “Cost of Living” factors include the last question from table 8 and a question about taxes as a reason someone stayed in or left Michigan. “Educational” factors included two questions about staying in or leaving Michigan for educational opportunities or to attend school.

Someone who attended a high school outside of the state of Michigan was 11.8 times more likely to leave Michigan than someone who attended a high school in Michigan. Someone who assessed his/her “Career” opportunities highly was 1.75 times more likely to leave the state. Individuals who rated “Environmental” factors highly were 1.39 times more likely to leave Michigan.

Factors with odds ratios that are less than one indicate reasons that the young mobile talent group were less likely to leave Michigan. Those factors included individuals who believed that they were “Home” (.52), those who expressed concerns with “Cost of Living” (.59), and those who were taking advantage of “Educational” opportunities (.66).

### Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis is a segmentation methodology used to identify homogenous groups with similar thoughts and opinions. This process is often used in marketing to identify different segments of consumers within a market who have differing needs and wants. Identification of these actionable market segments allows for the development of a



---

specialized mix of products/programs, communications, delivery platforms, and infrastructure support that best serves the needs of a specific group. In this analysis, questions from the survey are submitted to a cluster procedure.

The result of the first cluster procedure yields four distinct segments who are residing in Michigan as detailed below.

#### Group 1a: All You Need is Home

Members of this group stayed in Michigan for family and friends and because Michigan is home. They appreciate cultural and recreational activities. Their career choice and finding the job they wanted has little to do with their Michigan residency. Along with Group 4a, these individuals have the most student loan debt and significantly lower salaries compared to groups 2a and 3a. Almost 40% of these individuals make less than \$15,000 per year.

#### Group 2a: No Ties, Great Job

These individuals are most likely to state that they live in Michigan due to career opportunities and because they found a job they wanted. This group is least likely to have friends and family in Michigan. They have the highest income along with Group 3a and low student loan debt. Two-thirds had an internship or co-op while in school. Over 25% of this group have advanced degrees and they have the highest salary of all four groups who stayed in Michigan. Parents of the graduates in this group have significantly more education than the individuals from group 1a. There are proportionally more Asians in this group.

#### Group 3a: My Beloved Michigan

Members of this group are most likely to state that they live in Michigan due to career opportunities and that they found the job they wanted. Like Group 1a, they stayed for family and friends and because Michigan is home. This group is very “pro-Michigan”; they give the highest ratings to the recreational activities, social life, and physical attributes of the state. They have the highest income along with Group 2a, as well as low student loan debt. Like group 2a, two-thirds had an internship or co-op while in school and stayed to work for a specific employer.

#### Group 4a: Ready for a Clean Break

These individuals are least likely to state that stayed in Michigan to further their career. Almost half are in Michigan for family and friends, but many express that Michigan is not their home. Like Group 2a, about 25% strongly say that they are not here for family and friends. This group worked the hardest to leave the state with 50% seeking employment outside of Michigan, compared to 33%, 42%, and 22% for the other three groups, respectively. About one-third of them intended to live outside of Michigan after graduation compared to 10%, 28%, and 5% for the other three groups, respectively. This group has the lowest salary, with almost 50% making less than \$15,000 per year. Compared to the other three groups, fewer graduates in this group received their degrees in engineering or business. Top degree areas for this group include the social sciences and communications. They do not agree that their degree has prepared them for the next steps in their career. There are proportionally more African-Americans in this group.

The result of the second cluster procedure yields three distinct segments who are residing elsewhere in the US, as detailed below.

#### Group 1b: Returned Home

This cluster is most likely to state that Michigan is not their home and has the largest Asian population. Individuals in this group left to be closer to family and friends. About 10% of this group is unemployed, compared with less than 5% for the other two groups. Slightly more people in this group earned master’s degrees or higher. Those who are employed most likely found their job through colleagues, friends, or family.

---

### Group 2b: Wanted to Stay In Michigan

Of the three groups who left, these individuals worked the hardest to find employment in Michigan. Over 30% strongly agreed they would have liked to have stayed in Michigan but could not find work. Over a third (37%) would like to spend their life in Michigan compared with just 7% in Group 1b and 17% in Group 3b.

### Group 3b: Trying Something New

This group gives reasons for leaving Michigan similar to Group 1a regarding cultural and social activities. They differ in that these individuals do not cite family/friends as a reason for leaving. Like Group 2b, they most likely found their job through a career fair.

### **Structural Equation Modeling Analysis**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a second generation data analysis technique that answers a set of research questions in one systematic and comprehensive analysis. It is widely accepted that SEM is particularly suitable for testing theoretical relationships among many interrelated constructs. The following model was designed to understand how people's perceptions of Michigan affect their decisions as well as future intentions of returning or not returning to Michigan. The model includes the young mobile talent who are employed full-time. The model uses similar variables as the logistic regression model; however, "Public Facilities" is a factor that includes the public transportation and urban experiences variables from the "Environment" factor.

The results suggest that recent young mobile talent hold positive perceptions of Michigan's environment and educational opportunities, and negative perceptions of Michigan's public facilities. Interestingly, their perceptions of career opportunities in Michigan are mixed: Negative for the short term, but positive in the long run. Such a pattern suggests that although many people have moved out of Michigan for career reasons, they still hold an optimistic view of Michigan economics and hope to work and live in Michigan at some point. This is also reflected in the positive effect of job involvement on their intention to stay in Michigan. The more relevant they see their job to their career; the more likely someone is willing to say they intended to stay in Michigan.

Another finding in the analysis is that Michiganders are sentimentally attached to Michigan. Whether a person has attended a Michigan high school is the most important predictor for an individual's intention of staying or leaving Michigan. The model shows strong predictive power, explaining 46% variance of people's decision of staying in/leaving Michigan; and 34% variance of people's intention of staying in Michigan.

### **Open-Ended Comments**

The survey asked several open-ended questions, in which alumni could type out a response based on their own perspectives. Each of these questions had more than 75% of respondents include a comment. Analysis of this qualitative data consists of coding each response based on its content and analyzing the common pattern of responses. As explained below, recent graduates typically have positive views of Michigan. At the same time, concerns about work and career development took center stage in their comments.

### What are your feelings about Michigan?

Of the responses to this question, more than half (54%) were whole-heartedly positive. Characteristic responses include: *"I love Michigan!"* and *"Michigan is where I want to live. Period."* Many alumni mention that Michigan is their home and where they grew up (e.g., *"I love it here, this is home"*). It is also a place where they have a large number of social connections (e.g., *"I love Michigan. It's where my family and most of my friends live, and I will always consider it to be home"*). Michigan is viewed favorably in terms of its four-season climate, recreational activities, physical features, and cultural environment (e.g., *"Love everything it has to offer. From the Lakes to beaches and the different seasons"*).

---

In contrast to these positive views, just over a quarter (27%) of respondents had favorable views of Michigan, but expressed some reservations. The number one problem cited was the lack of employment opportunities. For example, one respondent said: *"I have a love/hate relationship with this state. It's my home, and it's beautiful and fun (most of the time), but I can't find enough work to save my life."* Another put it similarly, *"Michigan is a great place to live IF you have a job, a permanent job."* In many of these comments, there is a reluctance to leave Michigan, coupled with the recognition that they may need to leave in order to find a job or career (e.g., *"I don't want to contribute to the 'brain drain' which is just making things worse and worse here. . . . Ideally, I would like to stay in Michigan, but I may have to move out of state if I want to advance my career"*).

#### What have been the biggest challenges you have faced since graduating from college?

There were six types of challenges that emerged from analysis of this question: 1) finding a job/career development issues; 2) financial stress/debt; 3) making the transition from college to "real" life (including getting used to an "adult" life, especially its work schedule); 4) personal problems (including illness, mental health problems, indecision, lack of motivation, and isolation); 5) living arrangements (including moving back in with parents); and 6) applying to and/or attending graduate or professional school.

More than a third (35%) of responses related to difficulty finding a job and other career development challenges. One characteristic response was: *"Finding a job. ANY job."* Many recent graduates mentioned that they had experienced unemployment, underemployment or "malemployment" (employment in jobs that do not utilize their college degrees). These comments covered such issues as being unable to find a "career" position, low wages, needing to work part time because full-time positions were not available (e.g., *"Loading myself up with enough part time jobs to pay for a place to live and get ready for loan payments"*), and not being able to find a position in the field studied in college (e.g., *"The position I took was outside the field of my degree"*). Many respondents felt that they lacked the practical experience that is now a requirement of most entry-level jobs (e.g., *"To get a job you need experience, to get experience you need a job"*). Many felt that their university did not provide adequate assistance with the transition to work. In the words of one student, the biggest challenge was *"Securing a career. [My college] did not help post-graduation. I was on my own."* As a result of low wages and student loan debt, 21% of respondents documented financial stress as challenging (e.g., *"Crushing college debt/student loans,"* and *"Surviving on 12k/year with over 10k in student loans currently accruing interest. I cannot describe the feeling of hopelessness. And to think that some have it worse than me"*).

#### If you could change anything about your college experience, what would it be?

Fourteen percent said that they would not change anything about their college experience. Nearly 35% of responses centered on changes that alumni would have made in their academic lives. The most common responses concerned choice of major or program. While many students did not specifically mention how they would change their major or program (e.g., *"Major in something different"*), some comments indicated that they wish they would have chosen a major with clear links to the job market (e.g., *"Choosing a major that better prepared me for the job market"*). Similarly, about 20% expressed a desire to have gained more practical, work-related experiences while in college, such as internships, work experience, and volunteer experience. For example, one respondent said she would have found *"More internship opportunities, more focus on career pathways. Co-op opportunities, networking functions,"* while another said they wished they had gained *"more career related experience while still in school."*

#### What advice would you give to someone who is graduating from college this year?

Echoing the themes above, 65% gave advice about the process of getting a job and/or career development. The most common type of advice was to apply for jobs "early;" that is, before graduating from college (e.g. *"Start looking for jobs before graduation"*). There was also advice on the value of networking (e.g., *"Network, network, network! Reach*



---

out to everyone you know and . . . humbly ask for advice, have conversations. Opportunities will turn up in places you never expected”), gaining work experience, completing internships, applying for many positions, and utilizing the job-related services at one’s university. In addition, some respondents advised new graduates to accept a less-than ideal work opportunity (e.g. *“Keep an open mind. You don’t have to start with your dream job, but you can work up to it”*). In contrast, other respondents advised future graduates to pursue a fulfilling position and not to “settle” for a job that does not mesh with their goals (e.g., *“Find a job you like and do what you love. If you don’t love it, quit it and do something else,”* and *“Get a career that you want, don’t settle for the first opportunity that presents itself”*). Linked to this job-related advice, 32% gave advice regarding personal characteristics, including perseverance (e.g., *“Don’t give up,”* and *“Don’t lose hope, jobs are out there. Be patient”*), being open to opportunities when they present themselves (e.g. *“Look at all your options, don’t be afraid to look outside of your comfort zone”*), following dreams (e.g., *“Do what you have always dreamed of doing after college”*), working hard to achieve goals (e.g. *“Success does not come easy but it is worth it”*), taking risks, and experiencing life (e.g., *“Take risks while you have the opportunity to do so. Carpe diem”*).

In summary, the open-ended questions allowed respondents to put their feelings and experiences into their own words. When they do so, most have positive views of Michigan, coupled with concerns about the work opportunities in Michigan. In fact, the issue of jobs and career development dominate the perspectives of recent college graduates—from the biggest challenges they faced to the advice they give to future graduates. While this emphasis is certainly not surprising, it is possible that employment-related issues may be the most influential factor in the future decisions of recent graduates.

### Conclusion

While 63% of Michigan’s young mobile talent are staying in Michigan, more than one-third still leave the state. Issues related to career opportunities and employment are the most frequently cited reasons for leaving. Many young graduates have a tremendous passion for the state and are optimistic they could return to the state in the future.

Opportunities exist to retain and attract young mobile talent as they consider urban experiences and transportation in their location decisions. This group will look for their next job in places they would like to live and not just the place they currently reside. They also indicate they would relocate for the right opportunity, indicating that employment opportunities are vital to “place.”

This group sees educational opportunities in Michigan, but the findings show that students with internships and relevant career experiences are more likely to find employment. The comments from recent alumni indicate that finding a job is more difficult than earning the degree; recognizing opportunities and preparing for a career is something that should begin early and continue beyond the first job.



---

<sup>1</sup> 101 Wacky Ideas: Reclaiming a Nation of Pre-Graduates. CEOs for Cities Report. <http://www.ceosforcities.org//research/101-wacky-ideas-reclaiming-a-nation-of-pre-graduates/>. 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Is College Worth It? College Presidents, Public Assess, Value, Quality and Mission of Higher Education. PEW Social & Demographic Trends. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/05/15/is-college-worth-it/6/#chapter-5-the-monetary-value-of-a-college-education>. May 15, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Wong, K., Yip, C.K., 1999. Education, economic growth, and brain drain. *Journal Economic Dynamics and Control* 23, 699-726.

<sup>4</sup> Walsh, Dustin. Slowing the Brain Drain: Internships in fight to keep college grad in Michigan. <http://www.detroitmakeithere.com/article/20100617/DM01/306069912>. June 17, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Michigan Higher Education Institutional Data Inventory data search on degrees conferred for all 15 public universities in the state of Michigan.

<sup>6</sup> Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan press release, March 21, 2013.