

## Do UC undergraduate alumni earn graduate degrees?

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UC graduates take many paths after graduation. Many choose to enter the workforce directly, and others delay their entry to continue their education at the graduate level. While student surveys suggest that 39 percent of UC undergraduates plan to pursue a graduate degree after graduation (UCUES, 2016), the extent to which UC undergraduates actually go on to earn a graduate degree has not been known until now.

Data from the national student clearinghouse (NSC) and California's employment development department (EDD) has enabled the UC Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP) team to assess the graduate degree completion of UC undergraduates, and the impact it has on their earnings trajectories. The NSC data provides a comprehensive measure of graduate degree completions on a national level. The EDD data includes earnings of UC alumni working in California, and provides an estimate of annual earnings by graduate degree outcome. Additionally, data from the CLIMB initiative at the Equality of Opportunity Project gives an estimate of alumni who contribute to charity.

This brief examines the types of graduate degrees UC undergraduate alumni earn, where they earn the degrees, at what point after graduating from UC they earn the degrees, the subsequent earnings trajectory for each graduate degree type and percentage of alumni contributing to charity.

### Graduate Degree Completions

UC alumni complete graduate degrees at rates largely consistent with their expressed plans to enter graduate school. Within 10 years of graduating, 35 percent of UC undergraduates earn some type of graduate degree, while 41 percent do so within 15 years of graduation. The majority, 51 percent of graduate degree earners complete a Master's degree, including academic and professional master's, 17 percent complete a health science professional degree, 13 percent a law degree, and 10 percent complete a MBA. About 9 percent complete an academic doctorate.

The discipline a UC student pursues as an undergraduate can lay the groundwork for the subsequent graduate degree.

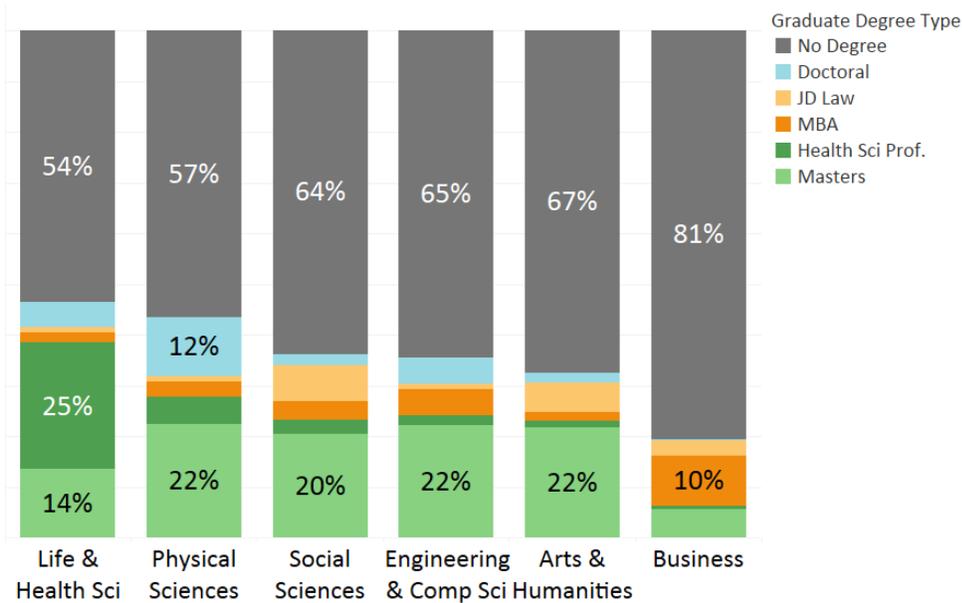
#### **Key Points on Graduate Degree Completions**

- Over 40 percent of UC undergraduate alumni earn graduate degrees within 15 years of graduating UC.
- More than half of graduate degree earners complete a Master's.
- UC life & health science, physical science and social science undergraduate majors are most likely to complete graduate degrees.

Figure 1 shows the types of graduate degrees earned by UC graduates by UC undergraduate major. Life & health science undergraduates are the most likely to earn a graduate degree, with 25 percent earning a health professional practice degree such as medicine, nursing, etc. Social science majors are the most likely to earn a law degree and business majors, despite having the lowest overall graduate degree completion rate, are the most likely to earn a MBA.

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**Figure 1. Graduate degree earners by UC undergraduate discipline**



A significant proportion of UC students earn their graduate degrees at a UC campus. Figure 2 below shows the institution type where UC alumni complete graduate degrees. Forty-two percent of UC alumni complete a doctorate at a UC campus, while only 19 percent earn an MBA at a UC campus. The majority of UC alumni earn their JDs, health sciences degrees, and Master’s degrees at private institutions, but about one quarter earn these degrees at a UC campus.

**Figure 2. Graduate degrees completed by institution type**



UC undergraduates who go on to pursue doctoral and MBA degrees typically earn the degree within six to nine years after graduating from UC. UC alumni often earn law degrees in a shorter timeframe, within four to six years after graduating, and health science professional degrees (e.g. Medicine) within five to seven years after graduation.

Note: For the top five graduate schools by institution types UC undergraduate alumni attend by degree type, see the [Appendix](#).

For more information on graduate outcome by student demographics visit: <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/UC-student-graduate-school-aspirations-outcomes.pdf>

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Most UC undergraduate alumni who complete a Master's degree do so within three to seven years after graduation. The amount of time can vary by master degree type. Table 2 shows more than half of Master's degree recipients pursue an academic masters (65 percent) and almost one in five (19 percent) earn a degree in education or teaching, while five percent or less pursue Master's of Social Work (MSW), Public Policy (MPP), Public Health (MPH) or Fine Arts. Master's in Public Policy graduates have the longest time-to-completion, about six years after graduating from UC, compared to Master's in Education, where the median completion time is about four years after graduating UC.

**Table 2. Master's degrees by type and years to completion after graduation**

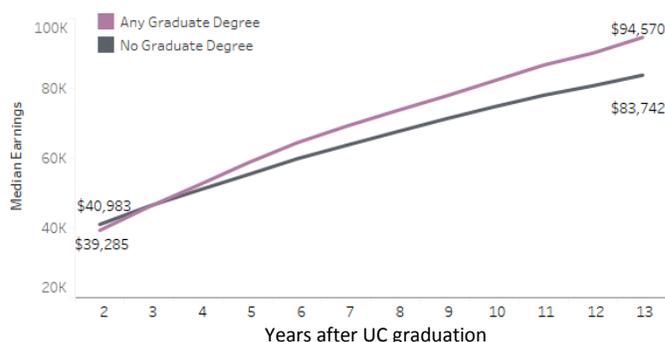
Graduate Degree	% of Masters			
	Degrees	25th	Median	75th
Academic Masters	65%	3.0	5.0	7.0
Masters Ed./Teach	19%	3.0	4.0	7.0
MSW Social Work	5%	4.0	5.0	7.0
MPH Public Health	4%	4.0	5.0	7.0
MPP Public Policy	4%	4.0	6.0	8.0
MFA Fine Art	3%	4.0	5.0	7.0

Note: These figures do not represent time to degree, but instead the number of years after receiving a bachelor's degree that they receive a Master's.

### Earnings trajectory for Master's degree recipients

Generally speaking, earning a graduate degree enhances one's earnings trajectory. Figure 3 shows that by 13 years after graduating from UC, alumni without a graduate degree earn about \$84,000 compared to graduate degree recipients who earn about \$95,000.<sup>1</sup> The magnitude of the impact of a graduate degree on one's earnings trajectory, however, varies considerably by the type of degree earned.

**Figure 3. Earnings by years after graduating UC**



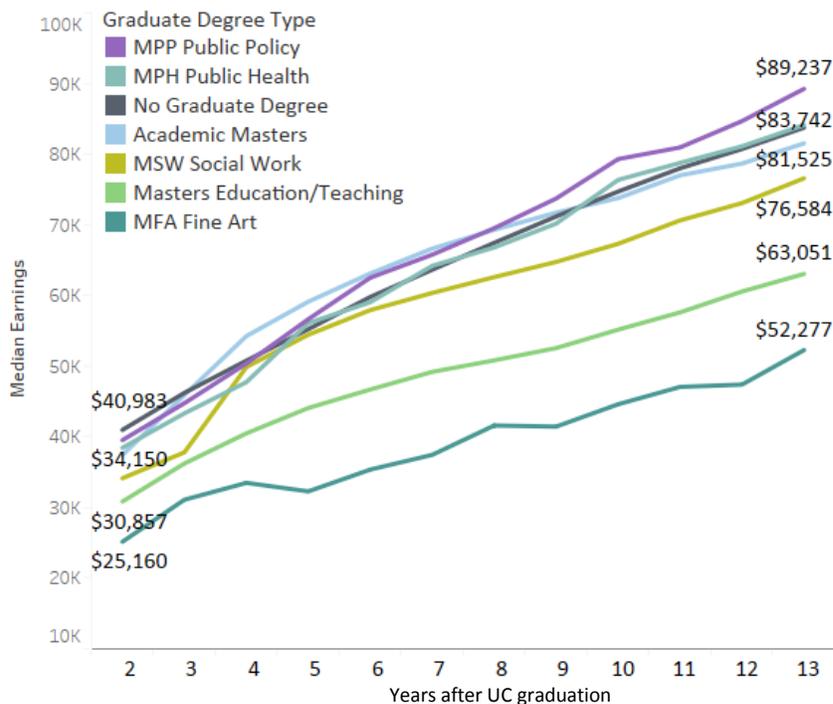
#### Key Points on Graduate Degree Earnings

- UC alumni who complete a graduate degree earn \$95K compared to \$84K for those who do not.
- Median earnings vary by graduate degree type, from \$204K for an M.D. to \$52K for a Master's in fine arts

<sup>1</sup> Note: When isolating to undergraduate majors in social science and arts & humanities, only the Master's in Social Work joins Masters of Public Policy and Master's of Public Health in surpassing earners with no graduate degree.

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**Figure 4. Earnings by years after graduating UC – Masters**

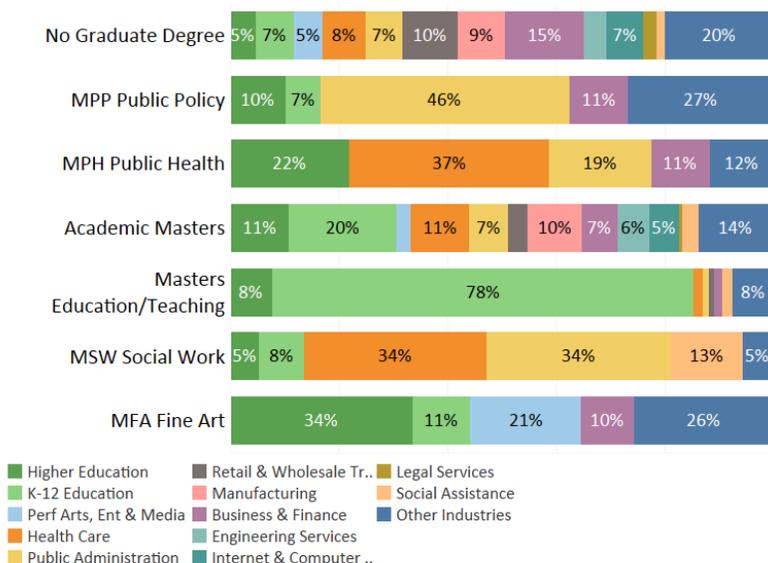


Earning a master’s degree does not necessarily result in higher earnings. Figure 4 shows the earnings trajectory of master’s degree recipients for each type of master’s degree compared to no graduate degree. Master’s in Public Policy and in Public Health achieve the highest salaries among master’s degrees, with typical earnings between \$84K and \$89K at 13 years after graduating UC.

However, the trajectory for each of these degrees is lower than alumni who do not earn a graduate degree.

Other master’s degrees (i.e. Academic Master’s, Social Work, Education, and Fine Arts) lead to, on average, lower earnings trajectories, about \$52K to \$81K, 13 years after completing their education at UC compared to \$84K for those who did not complete a graduate degree.

**Figure 5. Industries of work – Masters**



The lower earnings among master’s degree earners are likely driven by the chosen industry of employment.

Figure 5 shows the industries of employment of UC alumni with Master’s degrees. Master’s degree earners work primarily in public service industries such as education, health care, public administration and social assistance, at 13 years after graduating UC. Those without a graduate degree work in a more diverse set of industries, including significant shares in business and finance where salaries are often higher. For example, the

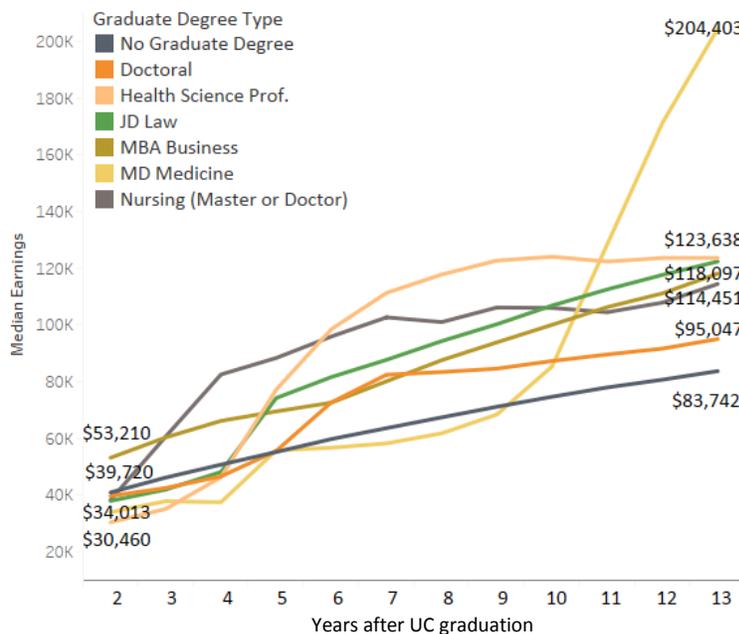
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average annual wage in 2016 in California, across all industries, was about \$63K.<sup>2</sup> Those working in K-12 education earned 27 percent less (\$45K) than the state average while those in the Finance and Insurance sectors earned 87 percent more, about \$116K. Earnings differentials across industries also exist for UC alumni completing academic masters, as median earnings in the Internet & Computer systems industry is \$142K compared to median earnings of \$65K for those working with an academic masters in the higher education sector.

The predominance in public service industries among Master’s degree recipients reflects the strong match between the master’s degree programs and the sectors they prepare graduates to serve, which supersedes the lower average salaries generally associated with these industries. However, within the public sector industries, a UC Master’s degree confers an earnings premium. UC alumni who go on to earn academic Master’s degrees earn about \$63K in K-12 education, compared to those working in K-12 without a graduate degree earning about \$50K. In the social assistance sector, the earnings premium of an academic Master’s degree is \$52K over \$42K.

### Earnings Trajectory for Doctoral and Professional Practice Degrees

Figure 6. Earnings by years after graduating UC –JD, HS Prof and Doctoral



Professional practice and doctoral degrees offer significant earnings premiums. Jobs in healthcare requiring a Master’s degree are consistently listed as some of the fastest growing occupations in California<sup>3</sup>.

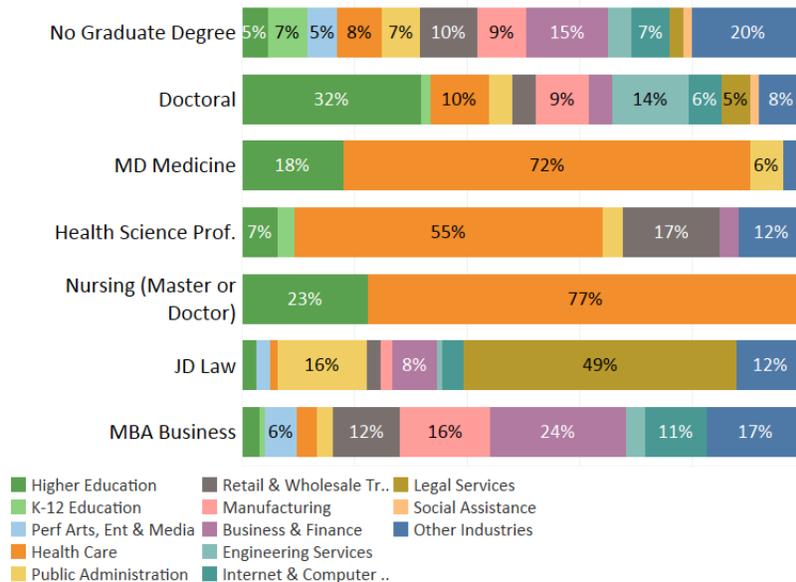
Figure 6 shows MDs earn, on average, more than twice than those with no graduate degree at 13 years after graduating from UC. JD and MBA recipients can expect earnings of about \$120K followed by salaries around \$100K for Health Professionals and doctoral degree recipients.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages - Bureau of Labor Statistics

<sup>3</sup> Data sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics (CES), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) industry employment, and Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) data.

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**Figure 7. Industries of work – JD, HS Prof and Doctoral**



The industries of employment of professional practice and doctoral degree recipients closely match their degrees. Figure 7 shows that a large share of doctoral recipients work in higher education, while fewer JD, MD and MBAs work in the education, social assistance, and public administration sectors, at 13 years after graduating UC.

## Contributions to Charity

Through data made available from the [CLIMB initiative](#) and the [Equality for Opportunity Project](#), it is possible to estimate percentages of UC alumni who have made contributions to charity. Regardless of the graduate degree earnings premium, UC alumni give back at higher rates than the national average.

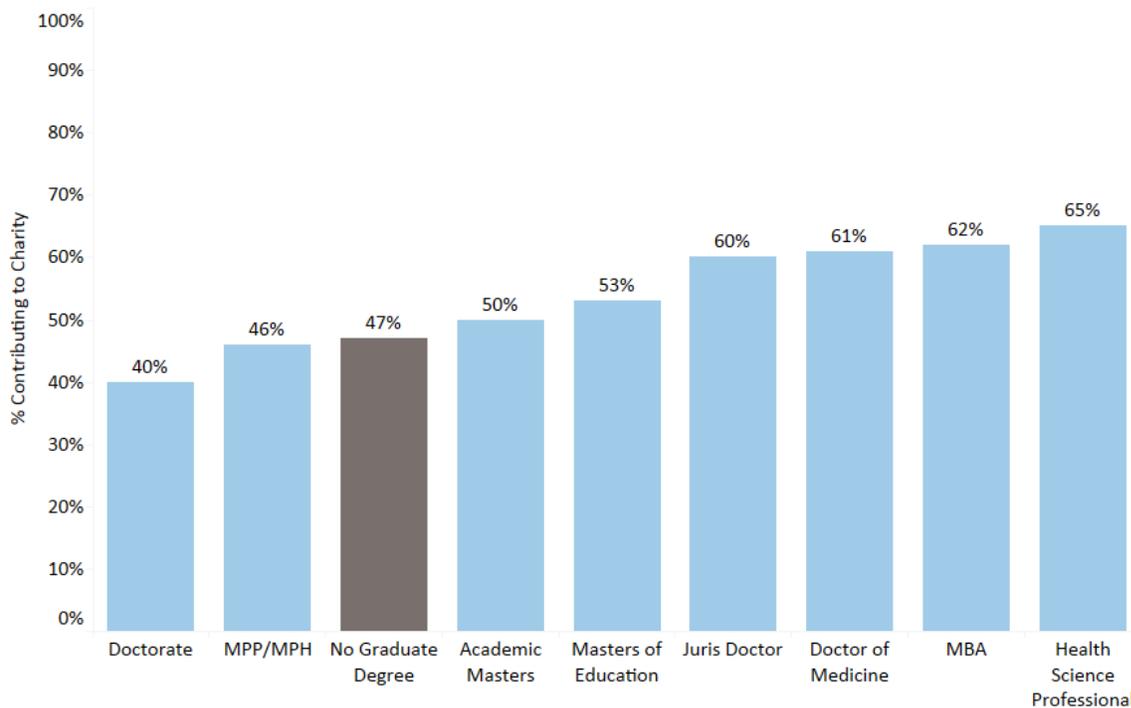
Figure 8 shows the percentage of UC alumni by degree type who contributed to charity as measured by itemized deductions on IRS tax forms. Thirteen years after graduating UC, Health Science professionals are the most likely to contribute to charity followed by MBA, MD and JD recipients. While there is a correlation between charitable contributions and income, it is not a one to one relationship. MPP/MPH recipients earn more than Master’s of Education and MD earn more than Health Science professionals and MBAs. Of note, 50 percent of all UC alumni make charitable contributions, which is well over the national rate of 24 percent.

### Key Points on Charitable Contributions

- 50 percent of all UC alumni report charitable giving, compared to 24 percent nationwide.
- IRS reporting on UC charitable giving ranges from 40 percent for PhD recipients and 65 percent for health science professionals.

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Figure 8. Contributions to charity – terminal degree



Note: These figures underestimate for the percentage of alumni contributing to charity; it reflects only those who report charitable earnings.

### Conclusion

While the majority of UC undergraduates choose to enter the workforce directly without pursuing a graduate degree, a significant share continue in graduate school to expand their knowledge and skill set toward a more specialized area of expertise. Given the academic qualifications and research experience required for admission to most graduate programs, this speaks to the quality of the educational preparation that UC provides.

The impact of a graduate degree on earnings trajectory is positive but mixed, with some degrees conferring a significant earnings premium, others resulting in somewhat lower earnings, and nearly all of them postponing full-time earnings for several years. Nonetheless, a graduate degree represents a major goal and significant accomplishment for many UC undergraduates. It also prepares them for the specific type of work they seek to do, whether it be law, medicine, or public affairs or social assistance.

# Do UC undergraduate alumni go on to earn graduate degrees?

## Appendix – Top 5 Institutions of UC Alumni Graduate Degree Attainment

Degree Earned	UC Campuses		Private Institutions		CSU		Other Publics	
Doctoral	UC - LOS ANGELES	9%	ALLIANT INTERNATIONAL UNIV.	4%			UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	2%
	UC - DAVIS	7%	STANFORD UNIVERSITY	3%			UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	1%
	UC - SAN DIEGO	6%	TOURO UNIV.CALIFORNIA	3%			UNIVERSITY OF OREGON	1%
	UC - IRVINE	5%	UNIVERSITY OF S. CALIFORNIA	2%			UNIV.OF ILLINOIS @ URBANA	1%
	UC - BERKELEY	5%	MIT	2%			UNIV.OF WASHINGTON - SEATTLE	1%
JD	UC - HASTINGS	10%	LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIV.	8%			UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	1%
	UC - LOS ANGELES	7%	UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO	6%			UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA	1%
	UC -DAVIS	5%	SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY	5%			ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY	0.4%
	UC - BERKELEY	4%	UNIVERSITY OF S. CALIFORNIA	4%			UNIV OF ILLINOIS @ URBANA	0.4%
	UC - IRVINE	1%	UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC	4%			RUTGERS	0.4%
MBA	UC - LOS ANGELES	7%	UNIVERSITY OF S.CALIFORNIA	8%	CSU - FULLERTON	2%	UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	2%
	UC - IRVINE	5%	PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY	5%	SD STATE UNIV.	2%	UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - AUSTIN	1%
	UC - DAVIS	3%	UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX	3%	CSU - SACRAMENTO	2%	ARIZONA STATE UNIV.	1%
	UC - BERKELEY	2%	GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY	3%	SF STATE UNIVERSITY	2%	INDIANA UNIV. BLOOMINGTON	0.4%
	UC - SAN DIEGO	1%	SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY	2%	SJ STATE UNIVERSITY	1%	UNIV.OF WASHINGTON - SEATTLE	0.4%
Health Science Professional	UC - LOS ANGELES	8%	WESTERN UNIV. OF H.S.	9%			TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	1%
	UC - SAN FRANCISCO	7%	UNIVERSITY OF S. CALIFORNIA	9%			UNIV. OF ILLINOIS @CHICAGO	<1%
	UC - DAVIS	5%	UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC	4%			UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	<1%
	UC-SAN DIEGO	4%	TOURO UNIV. CALIFORNIA	3%			THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	<1%
	UC - IRVINE	2%	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY	2%			VA COMMONWEALTH UNIV.	<1%
Master's	UC-LOS ANGELES	7%	UNIVERSITY OF S.CALIFORNIA	7%	SJ STATE UNIVERSITY	3%		
	UC-SAN DIEGO	3%	NATIONAL UNIVERSITY	2%	SF STATE UNIVERSITY	3%		
	UC - IRVINE	3%	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY	2%	SD STATE UNIVERSITY	2%		
	UC-DAVIS	3%	PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY	2%	CSU - LONG BEACH	2%		
	UC - BERKELEY	3%	STANFORD UNIVERSITY	1%	CSU - NORTHRIDGE	2%		