

Urban Studies Graduate Survey Results

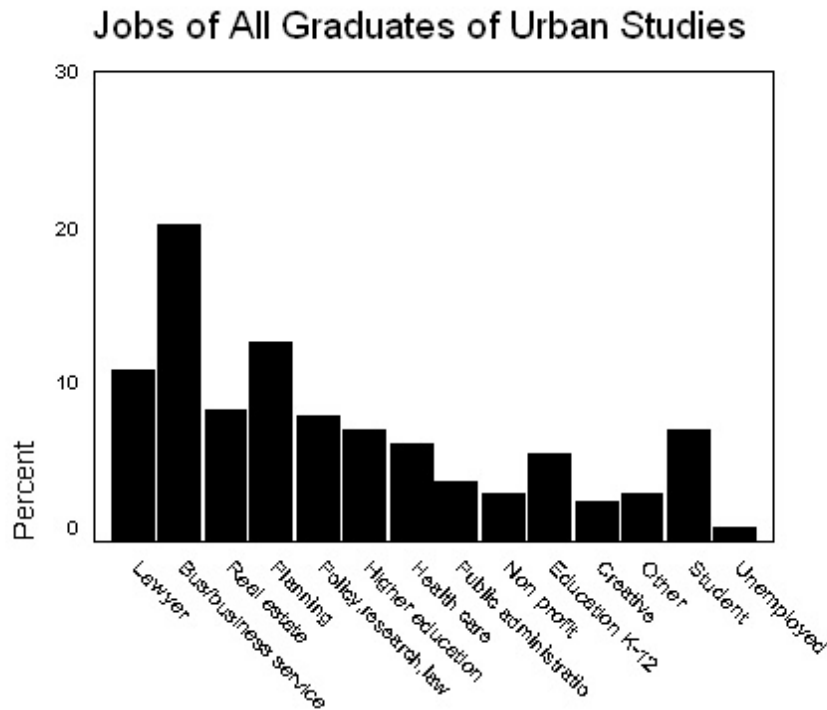
Analyzed and Written by Keith Tonsager

Introduction

In the summer of 1999, the Urban Studies Program conducted a survey of Penn alumni awarded the Urban Studies major from 1970-1999.¹ In 2001, an additional survey was sent to graduates of the program from 2000. The second survey was identical to the first and the results of the two have been combined to give a detailed account of the careers of Urban Studies majors. Approximately 535 surveys were mailed with 236 responding, for a response rate of 44%.

Employment

Urban Studies alumni are employed in a variety of fields – including business, law, real estate, planning, policy and public administration, health care, and education. The figure below shows the distribution of all graduates since the program’s inception.



As illustrated above, more than 20% of Urban Studies graduates work in **business** though the kind of work that Urban Studies graduates do in the field of business is quite varied. Urban Studies graduates work in **marketing, investment banking, public relations, and business or financial consulting.**

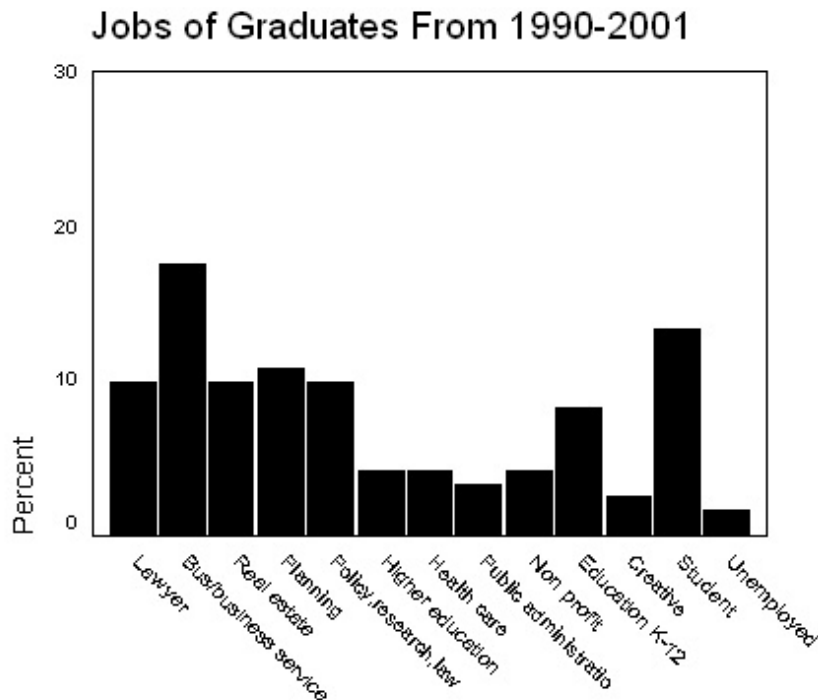
¹ We obtained addresses available to the Office of Alumni Relations.

The majority of Urban Studies graduates work in fields other than business. Graduates were distributed fairly evenly among the fields of **planning** (13%), **law** (11%), **real estate** (9%), **policy research** (8%), and **higher education** (7%). Categorizing by field, however, only gives a rough picture of the variety of occupations of Urban Studies graduates. For example, graduates earning a **law** degree have gone on to work in large private firms, public interest organizations, government agencies, as well as some graduates practicing law on their own.

Similarly, graduates pursuing the **planning** field also break down into three groups. Some graduates in the planning field work in government at the city, state, and federal levels. Others work for private planning companies often as analysts or as consultants. Finally, graduates in planning also work for non-profit organizations and universities.

Additionally, the **policy, research, and law** category is one of the most diverse, with people doing research on a number of issues such as economic development, psychology, human rights, housing, health education, and child care to name a few.

The chart below titled “Jobs of Graduates From 1990-2001” characterizes the jobs of graduates from the most recent decade. In terms of decade of graduation, there have been a number of fluctuations that are worthy of note. These fluctuations have been partly due to where graduates are in their careers and partly due to opportunities, the



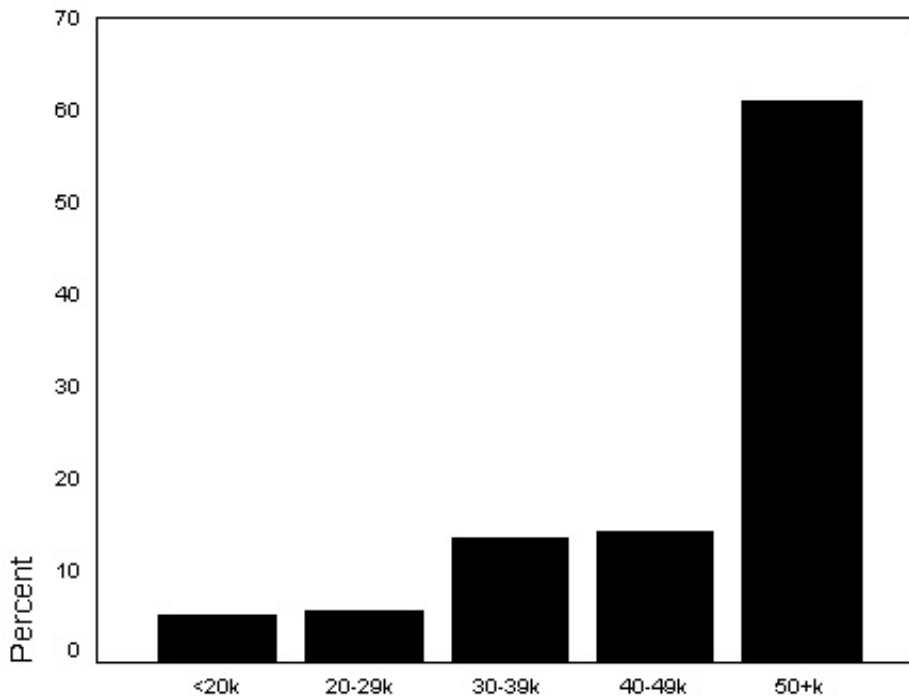
economy, and preferences. The most significant fluctuation for graduates over the past 30 years has been in the fields of business and law. People who graduated between 1970 and 1979 are about as likely to be working in business as in law with about 18% of graduates working in each. From 1980-1989, however, the percent of graduates

practicing law drops to only 7% while business makes up around 28% of graduates' employment. In 1990-2001, the number of graduates in working in business and law becomes more even as business drops to 17% and law rises to 10%. Still, there are fewer recent grads in law than those in the 1970's.

Other notable trends are in the real estate and planning sectors. While number of people involved with real estate rises gradually as one looks to later decades, the planning sector took a significant leap upwards during the 1980's, constituting over 20% of graduates and then receding to around 10% (approximately the level of law, and real estate) in the 1990's. The jump in real estate may account for the decrease in planning. Interestingly, there was no one who graduated during the 1980's who can be classified as being involved in K-12 education while graduates from the 1990's teach in K-12 at a rate around 8%.

In terms of income, Urban Studies graduates have done well. Figure 3 below shows that most of our graduates earn more than \$50,000 a year.

Current Income Distribution



A full 61% of all graduates who reported their income earn over \$50 thousand per year. Additionally, 14% of all graduates earned between \$40 and \$49 thousand per year. Unfortunately, it is not possible to make a direct comparison between incomes of Urban Studies graduates and graduates from the College. A rough comparison is possible using data the College collected for 2000 graduates. In 2000, the average salary of a College graduate was \$39,065. Out of the 17 responses from Urban Studies students that graduated in the year 2000, 4 reported having salaries higher than the College average. More specific information is available in the Urban Studies office.

Graduate Degrees

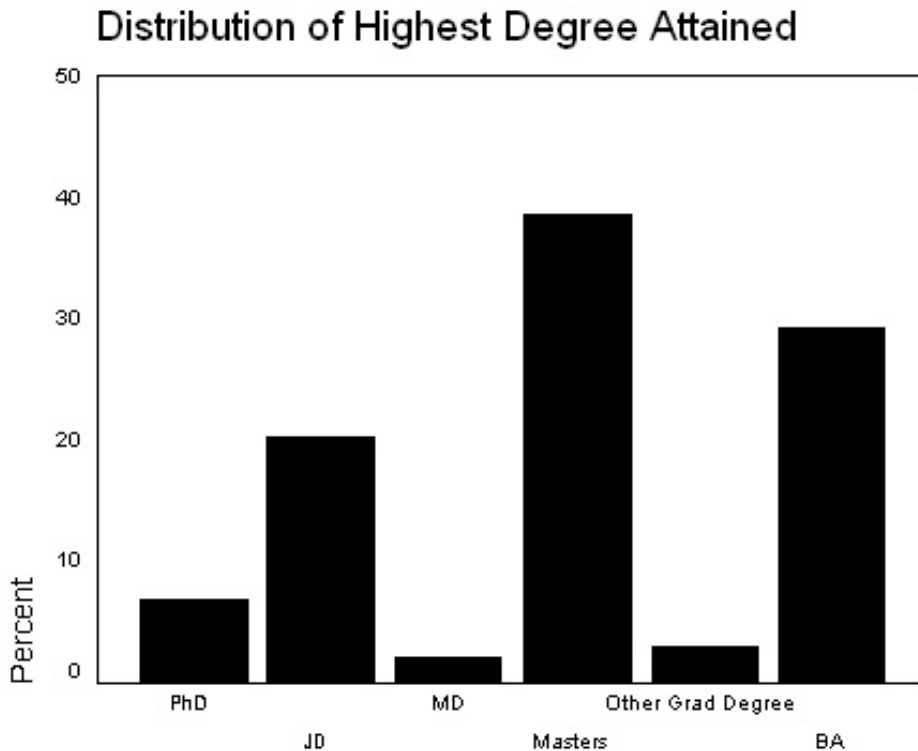
➤ *Now or later?*

Students graduating from the Urban Studies program are very likely to attend graduate school at some point in their careers. Out of all Urban Studies alumni, 71% of have attended graduate school and received a graduate degree of some sort. Of these alumni that attended graduate school, however, only 33% attended immediately after receiving their B.A. The remaining 67% of students entered the work force before going back to school.

Interestingly, the percentage of students who went directly to graduate school immediately after Penn fell from 33% to 19% from the 1970-1979 decade to the 1980-1989 decade, but then rose to 21% in 1990-1999.

➤ *Now or Never?*

The percentage of graduates who do not attend graduate school at any point in their careers has been on a steady rise since the 1970-1979 decade. Only 9% of the 1970's alumni did not continue into some form of higher education. In comparison, out of the classes of 1980-1989 and 1990-1999, 25% and then 35% of the graduates did not go on to graduate school. Of course, more recent graduates may still return to school at some point in the future.



➤ *What to study?*

Urban Studies graduates who continue their educations are most likely to attain a master’s degree. Out of the total number of graduates that responded to our survey, 39% attained a master’s degree as their highest degree (see figure 1). The second most popular graduate degree has been the *Juris Doctorate*, with 20% of alumni completing **law** school. 7% of Urban Studies graduates have completed Ph.D. programs. Out of the students going on to attain Masters degrees, about 28% are in **city planning**, 24% are in **business**, 14% are in **government** and 11% are in a **social science**. The remaining students pursued master’s degrees in a variety of other fields.

➤ *Law vs. Planning?*

In the previous survey of graduates from 1983-1992, City Planning was reported overall as the most popular graduate program. In this survey of Urban Studies graduates, however, **Law** was the most popular, attracting almost 20% of those going to graduate school. **City Planning** was the second most popular graduate programs with 14%, while **Public Policy** and **Business** programs accounted for 10% and 9% respectively. Law school attendance rates have paralleled the law employment rates over time. For alumni graduating between 1970 and 1979, attending law school was much more common (36% of graduates) than for students graduating in later years. Of graduates between 1980 and 1989, 19% went to law school, and 26% of graduates between 1990 and 2000 attended law school. Rates of those going to law school for the College as a whole are relatively similar to Urban Studies’ rates, with the percentages during the 1990’s staying between 27% and 30% consistently.

Table 1: Urban Studies Students Attending Graduate School

Graduation Year	Percentage of Urban Studies Students Attaining a Graduate Degree	Percentage of Urban Studies Students Not Attaining a Graduate Degree
1970-1979	91.4%	8.6%
1980-1989	82.5%	17.5%
1990-1999	63.4%	36.3%
2000	11.8%	88.2%
Total	71.2%	28.8%

➤ **Compared to College Grads?**

Of the graduates from the 1970-1979 classes, over 91% report having attended graduate school at some point after getting their bachelor degree from Penn. It is likely that rate of attending graduate school for the group that completed their degrees after 1990 will increase with time, though we do not know if it will reach the mark of the 1970-79 graduates.

Urban Studies graduates are as likely to attend graduate school as graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences as a whole. Over all the years, more than two-thirds of Urban Studies graduates attend graduate school in some field. Comparing our survey results for the Urban Studies class of 2000 with the class of 2000 College survey, fewer

Urban Studies grads went straight to graduate school than did college students as a whole. Both sets of data, however, reflect an overall decline of students going straight to graduate school in the 1990s.

Where Do Urban Studies Graduates Live?

Graduates of the Urban Studies Program have found employment and educational opportunities all across the country, but over time, alumni have been more likely to live in the Northeastern part of the United States.

Table 2: Urban Studies Graduates by Region

Region	Percent
Northeast	53%
Midwest	9%
South	19%
West	18%
Abroad	2%

A full 53% of all Urban Studies alumni indicated that the **Northeastern region** was their permanent address. The least likely place for an Urban Studies graduate to reside has been the Midwest, with only 9% of Urban Studies graduates living in the region. Between the two polar opposite regions of the Northeast and the Midwest were the South and the West. The total percentage of Urban Studies alumni that lived in the South was 19% and was followed closely by the West with 18%.

➤ *Top Cities?*

A large percentage of graduates of the Urban Studies program have stayed relatively close to Penn, with 31% residing in the three top cities: **Philadelphia** (11%), **New York** (15%), and **Washington D.C.** (6%). After these three cities, the next most concentrated cities include **San Francisco**, **Boston** and **Los Angeles**, each with 3% of graduates, and **Chicago** with 2% (see map on page 2).

➤ *Trends?*

It is apparent that the trend for Urban Studies graduates has moved towards heavier concentration in the Northeast region. Of those earning their Urban Studies major between 1970 and 1979, 41% are currently residing in the Northeast, while of those graduating between 1990 and 2000, almost 60% live in the Northeast. Conversely, graduates living in the Midwest have steadily become less common over the past three decades with 14% of graduates from 1970-1979, 9% from the 1980-1989 classes, and 6% from 1990-2000. The percentage of alumni living in the West has stayed relatively consistent over time, going from 19% in 1970-1979 to 17.6%, while graduates living in the South have decline markedly, going from almost 26% in 1970-1979 to only 15.1% in 1990-2000.

➤ *How do Urban Studies Grads' Destinations Compare to Penn Grads Overall ?*

In comparison with graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences, Urban Studies graduates are more spread out over the 4 regions of the country. Whereas 60% of graduates of Urban Studies from 1990-2000 live in the Northeast region, 70% of College

of Arts and Sciences graduates in 2000 live in the Northeast. In addition, graduates of the College in the year 2000 were much less likely to reside in either the South or in the West than Urban Studies majors, with only 12% and 10% of College graduates working, respectively, in these regions.

Distribution location of Urban Studies graduates, 1970-2000 as of 2001

