

## Post-Graduation What's Next? 2025

# The Institute

*Turning Information into Insight*

*A partnership among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Maywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Hazleton, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton, Wilkes University, and the business community*

## Student Polling Project

The Institute launched a polling program in 2014. The Institute regularly polls students at its partnering higher education institutions. These polling and survey research services are part of The Institute's menu of services offered to all types of clients.

This 2025 poll assesses students' opinions about the region and their post graduation plans. A total of 675 students participated in this poll. Students from all class years, a variety of majors, and part-time and graduate students are well-represented in the data. The poll is distributed online through our academic partners, and the data was collected during March and April 2025.

The Institute is an applied research and economic consulting organization that fulfills two related priorities:

- (1) customized client solutions and strategies to facilitate decision-making
- (2) planning that enhances growth, impact, and sustainability for organizations.

The Institute also serves a public mission to provide data, analytics, and research to the community at large. This empirical, objective information is intended to drive discussion and innovative solutions that enhance regional quality of life and standard of living.

The Institute was formed as a unique collaborative of regional higher education institutions and the business community, and founded on the belief that good decisions are driven by good data.

### **When deciding where to launch their careers, students prioritize availability of jobs in their desired fields, along with cost of living and starting salary.**

Among eight options to consider when deciding where they will seek employment after graduation, 51.4 percent ranked availability of jobs in their desired fields either first or second. Nearly 49.5 percent placed cost of living either first or second on their lists.

### **Students also prioritize opportunities in their desired fields (along with starting salary) when evaluating job options.**

When asked to rank six possible factors to consider when evaluating job opportunities, students placed opportunities in their desired fields higher than any other option, with 59.8 percent placing the category first or second on their lists. A plurality nearing 38.0 percent placed starting salary first or second on their lists.

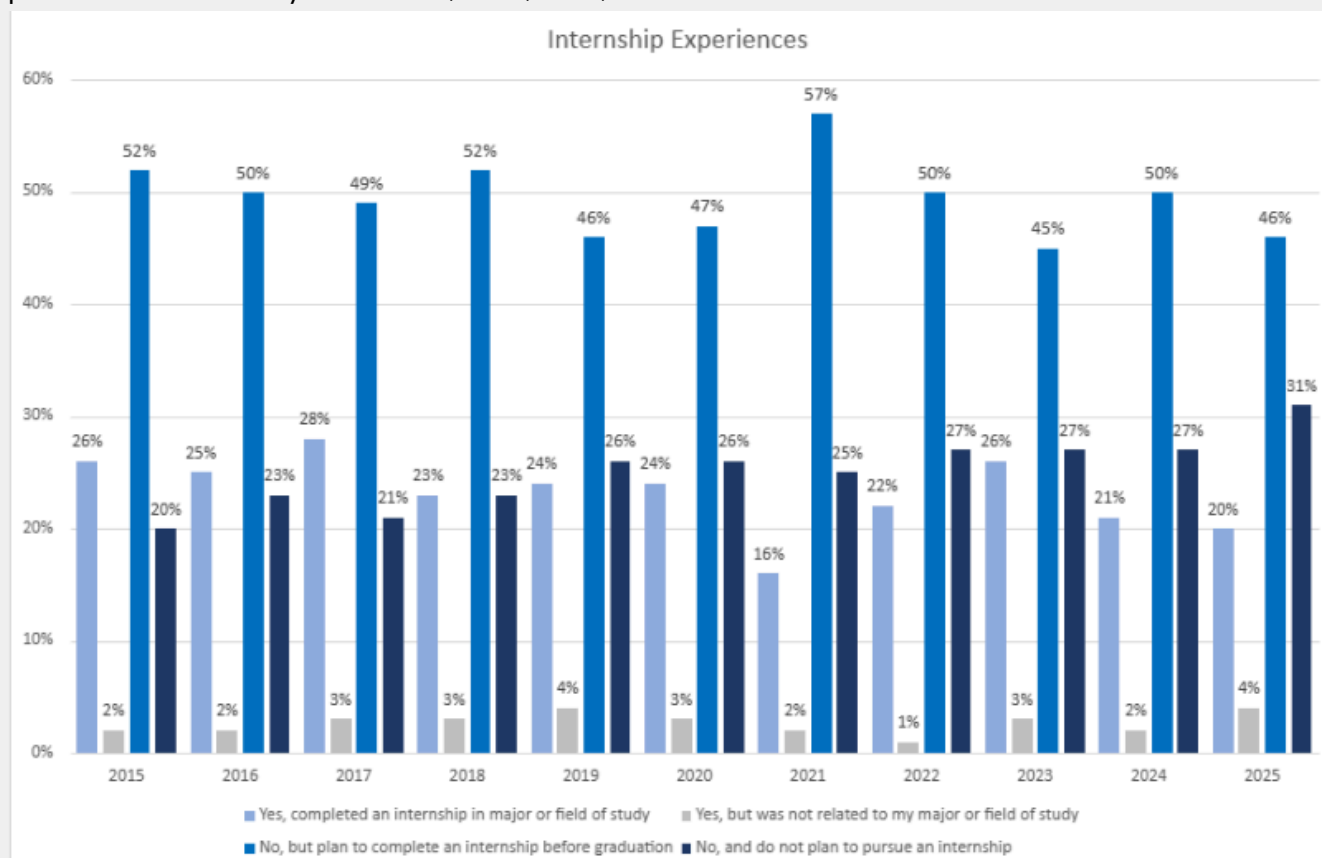
### **Student perceptions of Northeastern Pennsylvania remain mixed.**

About 33.3 percent of students view the Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy as "about the same" as the United States average, while 27.7 percent of respondents view it as worse. Similarly, 24.2 percent of respondents believe the region's quality of life is better than average, while 22.4 percent believe it is worse. A large segment of respondents remains neutral or unsure on their perceptions of the region.

## Post-Graduation What's Next? 2025

### Internships continue to be highly valued by students.

In the 2025 poll, 69.5 percent of respondents had either completed or planned to complete an internship before graduation. This is a significant and promising portion of respondents, though it is among the lowest rates recorded since polling began in 2015. Otherwise, it dropped below 75.0 percent in four other years – 2019, 2020, 2022, and 2023.



### Completion of a regional internship may induce students to remain in the region after graduation.

According to responses, 25.1 percent of students who intend to remain in Northeastern Pennsylvania after graduation have completed an internship in the region, compared to 25.8 percent of students who are likely to depart after receiving their degrees. Though no formal causal connection between these variables can be inferred, there is a strong connection.

NEPA Internship by Likelihood of Post-Graduation Relocation	Likely to Stay in NEPA	Unlikely to Stay in NEPA
Yes (completed internship in NEPA)	25.1% 65	25.8% 34
No (did not complete internship in NEPA)	74.9% 194	74.2% 98
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>132</b>

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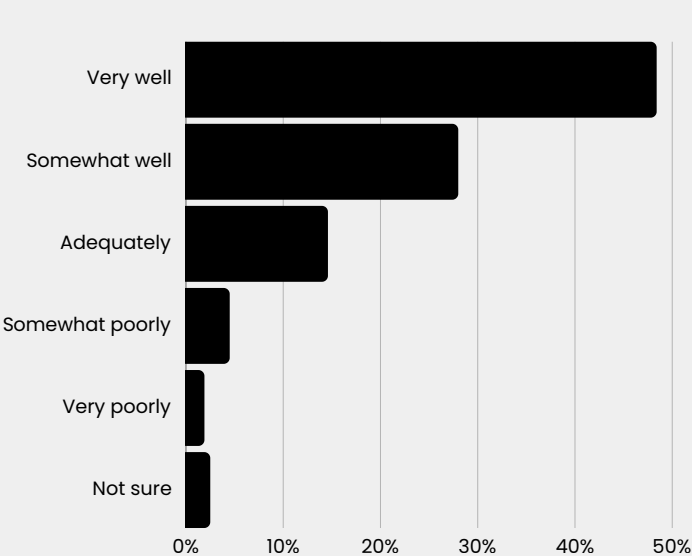
*The majority of students who completed internships received academic credit for doing so, and approximately 38.0 percent received payment for their work.*

Did you receive academic credit for your internship?	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	103	73.1%
No	38	27.0%

Did you get paid for your internship?	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes, was paid hourly wage/salary	48	33.8%
Yes, received stipend, reimbursement, or other one-time payment	6	4.2%
No	88	62.0%

**Students face some degree of uncertainty when considering graduate school.**

Over half of all respondents in every polling year from 2015 to 2021 responded either yes, they plan on attending graduate school or they are already in a graduate or professional school. These percentages decreased to 44.3 percent in 2022, before rising to 49.0 percent in 2023 and dropping down to 43.7 percent in 2024, when those who were unsure about attending graduate school comprised 33.8 percent of all respondents. In 2025, 76.4 percent of respondents said that they are planning to attend graduate school. Out of those who responded, 62.1 percent reported that they are wither very likely or somewhat likely to stay in NEPA post-graduation.

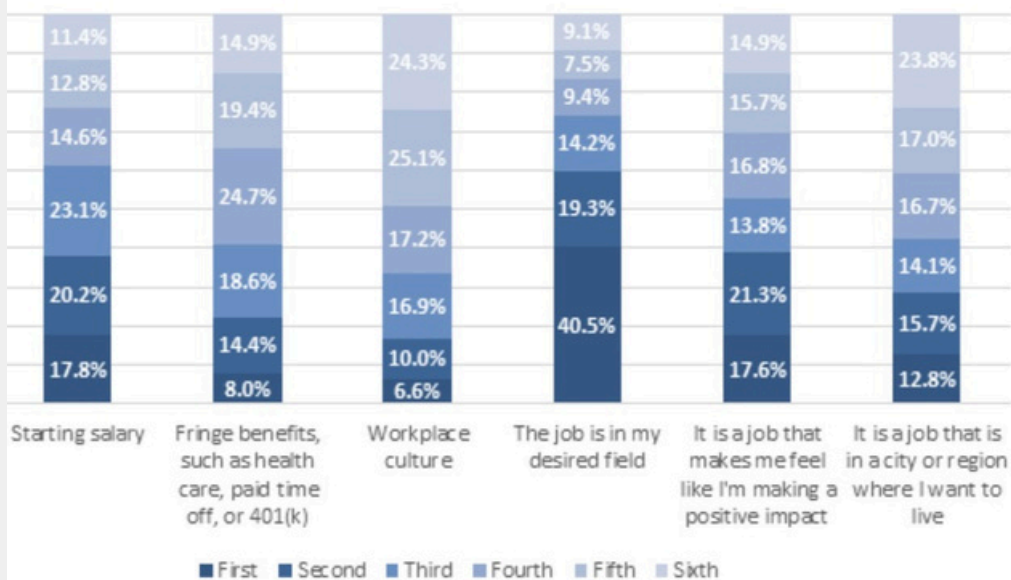


**Students feel their education has prepared them for their careers.**

The most recent poll showed that the majority of respondents feel prepared for their intended careers. In 2025, 76.2 percent of students felt that their college education prepared them either very well or somewhat well for their intended career paths. Another 14.6 percent reported that they felt adequately prepared. About 2.5 percent felt unsure about being adequately prepared for their intended careers.

## Post-Graduation What's Next? 2025

Importance in Consideration of Job Opportunities



### Considerations in Job Opportunities

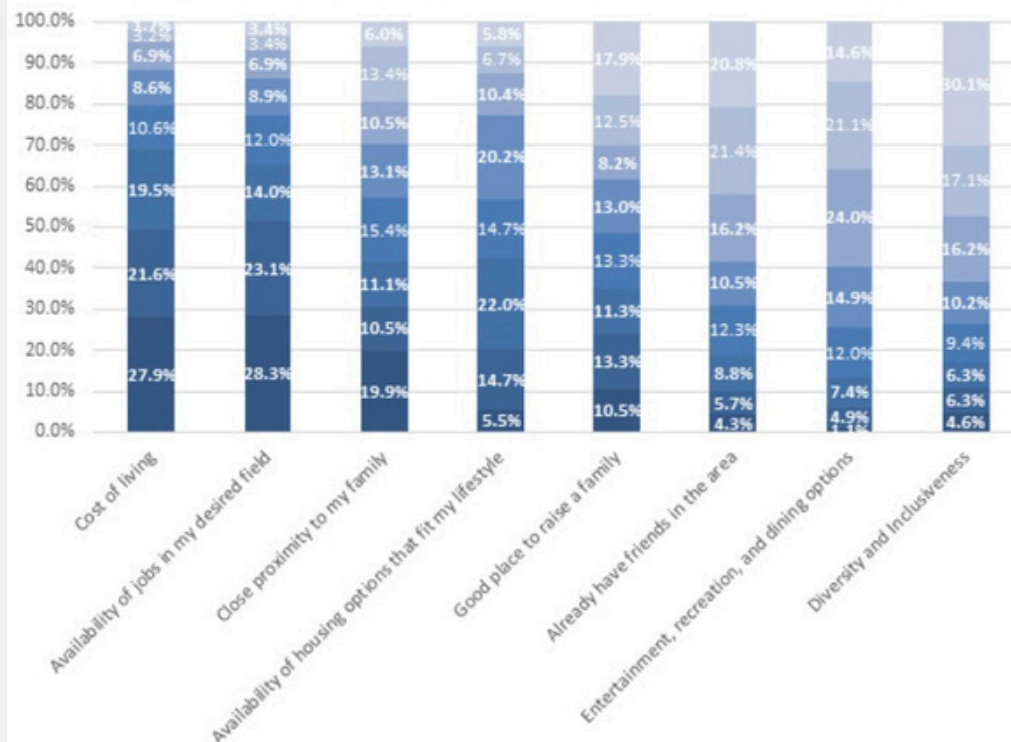
Availability of a job in a student's desired field is a chief priority for respondents when considering job opportunities. Compared to other options, this factor received the highest weighted average (at 4.5). Other significant factors include starting salary and the opportunity to make a positive impact. Workplace culture had the lowest weighted average (at 3.6).

### Considerations When Relocating and Job Seeking

Students were asked to rank a list of characteristics and features they would consider when deciding where to locate or seek employment after graduation from eight options: (1) Diversity and Inclusiveness; (2) Availability of Jobs in My Desired Field; (3) Close Proximity to My Family; (4) Already Have Friends in the Area; (5) Entertainment, Recreation, and Dining Options; (6) Cost of Living; (7) Good Place to Raise a Family; and (8) Availability of Housing Options That Fit My Lifestyle.

On average, the availability of jobs in students' desired fields and the cost of living were their most important consideration, with the highest weighted averages. Conversely, students seemed least concerned about already having friends in the area.

Importance in Consideration of Where to Locate or Seek Job



## Post-Graduation What's Next? 2025

### Perspectives on the Region—Economy

Respondents were asked about Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy in relation to the United States as a whole.

The majority of student perceptions of Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy ranged from apathy to negativity. Overall, 14.3 percent of students who planned to stay in NEPA believed the region's economy to be somewhat better than that of the United States; only 1.6 percent rated it as much better. Approximately 24.0 percent believed it to be worse, however, and another 34.1 percent thought the region's economy is about the same as that of the United States. About 26.0 percent of the students were unsure about the current state of the regional economy.

Perceptions of the Regional Economy by Likelihood of Post-Graduate Relocation	Likely to Stay in NEPA	Unlikely to Stay in NEPA
Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy is much better than that of the United States	1.6% 4	0.0% 0
Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy is somewhat better than that of the United States	14.3% 37	8.3% 11
Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy is about the same as that of the United States	34.1% 88	31.8% 42
Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy is somewhat worse than that of the United States	21.7% 56	28.0% 37
Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy is much worse than that of the United States	2.3% 6	6.8% 9
Not sure	26.0% 67	25.0% 33

Perceptions of the Regional Quality of Life by Likelihood of Post-Graduate Relocation	Likely to Stay in NEPA	Unlikely to Stay in NEPA
Northeastern Pennsylvania's quality of life is much better than that of the United States	5.1% 13	0.8% 1
Northeastern Pennsylvania's quality of life is somewhat better than that of the United States	24.9% 64	12.1% 16
Northeastern Pennsylvania's quality of life is about the same as that of the United States	35.8% 92	33.3% 44
Northeastern Pennsylvania's quality of life is somewhat worse than that of the United States	14.4% 37	30.3% 40
Northeastern Pennsylvania's quality of life is much worse than that of the United States	1.2% 3	5.3% 7
Not sure	18.7% 48	18.2% 24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>132</b>

### Perspectives on the Region—Quality of Life

Respondents were also asked the quality of life in Northeastern Pennsylvania compared to the United States as a whole. Their feedback was largely neutral. The share of respondents who planned to stay in NEPA who believe the quality of life to be better than that of the United States (30.0 percent) and the share of respondents who planned to leave NEPA who believe it is worse (30.3 percent) are comparable. A plurality of students who plan to stay in NEPA (35.8 percent) believed the region's quality of life to be about the same as that of the United States, and 18.7 percent were unsure.



## Academic Partners

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School of Medicine

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
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COLLEGE

**Keystone**  
**College**  
*La Plume, PA*

 **KING'S**  
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**Lackawanna**  
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County Community College

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UNIVERSITY

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UNIVERSITY.

 **PennState**  
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Wilkes-Barre

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EDUCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SCRANTON**  
A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

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## What We Believe

At The Institute, we believe that empowering leaders with the research-based strategies and solutions they need to make informed decisions will lead to a stronger economy and a better quality of life for regional residents. For over a decade, The Institute has worked behind the scenes to support initiatives that advance regional competitiveness and revitalize communities.

### 2025 Institute Underwriters

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