

Fall 2021

Recruiting Trends 2021-2022



Phil Gardner, PhD
Collegiate Employment Research Institute
Michigan State University

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, a non-economic event, has accelerated trends already emerging throughout the workplace, specifically remote work, technological job displacement, and growing disparity between those with a college degree (post-K12) and those without. Various data sources relay conflicting impressions of the current labor market and workplace conditions. Recent monthly Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) job reports show modest job growth even though employers posted more than 11 million jobs openings. Employers face challenges in obtaining and retaining talent never encountered before. Consider some of these snapshots of the economy and workplace:

- Individuals working remotely worked 48 minutes longer each day (Harvard Business School study) but enjoyed no daily commutes, saving them nearly \$250 per month (*This Week*, October 8). Of course, employees spent more time in virtual meetings with Microsoft Teams reporting a 148% increase in the time spent in these meetings.
- “Take this job and shove it!” might be the mantra of the labor force today. In the second quarter of 2021 over 11.5 million American workers quit their jobs (Labor Department) with 3.9 million in June alone sending the quit rate from separations (not firings or retirements) soaring to 69% -- an all-time high – that is until August when the rate went higher.
- While nearly 87% of workers would like to work remotely (LinkedIn poll), many managers do not trust approximately one-third of their remote workers with being productive while working remotely. The hybrid workplace that accommodates three days in the office per week (PricewaterhouseCoopers survey) and remote the other days receives support of most employees (Prudential poll).
- Currently the most remote friendly city is Columbus, Ohio (27% of business entirely remote), and the least remote city is Houston, Texas (2.8% of business entirely remote).
- During the pandemic 30% of workers younger than 40 have considered changing occupations or field of work compared to 20% for the overall workforce.
- Many groups have withstood the worst during the pandemic, especially health care and service workers. However, women have seen their careers severely disrupted. Approximately 4.2 million women left the workforce during the pandemic to care for children and are yet to return to the workplace. Daycare centers remain closed or understaffed, down more than 130,000 workers (this sector often pays near minimum wage). Since managers believe employees in the office outperform those at home, add the burden of constantly minding the kids, women face damaging long-term prospects. Evidence reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* points to the detriment of pandemic to women in research positions compared to men.
- Amazon now employs 11 out of every 153 U.S. workers.
- If you think college debt is bad, consider that 35% of Millennials have gone into debt to attend a bachelor/bachelorette party and 20% to attend a wedding.
- A *Wall Street Journal* report that buckles the knees finds median income of Black households with college degrees in their 30’s plummeted in inflation adjusted numbers from \$50,500 in 1990 to \$8,200 today. White households of the same demographic grew 17% to \$138,000. Eighty-four percent of Black households carry student debt with individual loans averages =

\$23,000 (median = \$44,000) compared to Whites \$17,000. Black households carry more than two times the college debt as Whites.

- College gender gap widens with more men deciding not to attend college. Richard Reeves' concern is that U.S. cannot sustain a strong labor market if male's identity is at odds with education. Women continue to strive to obtain college degrees because the job options without a degree are awful. Men still dominate in engineering, technology and finance. MBA programs still slightly favor men, but this past year saw men fill over 60% of open MBA positions with women either out of work force or over looked because of working from home.
- TikTok now has one billion users or a 1,700% growth rate since January 2018. Facebook took 8.7 years and YouTube 8.1 years to achieve this same target. With Boomers taking over Facebook younger folks are migrating to other platforms.
- July 2021 was the hottest in 150 years of record keeping with a global average of 62.07 degrees. The last seven days of the month were the hottest ever recorded.

SUMMARY

The college labor market proves resilient with a strong rebound after the swoon last year due to COVID. Employers who sat out last year or lower hiring expectations in the face of uncertainty COVID projected into the economy return eager to hire. Their outlook for this year is the highest figure reported since the 2008 recession. A period of very robust job growth. Associate and bachelor hiring benefits by double-digit growth with the focus on the 15% increase expected for bachelor's talent.

The actual strength of the college labor market remains murky as many employers failed to report their hiring targets despite expressing a strong eagerness to recruit aggressively. The absence of hiring targets is particularly noticeable among larger employers. Depending on their final hiring decisions, large organizational hiring can increase more than 25%, as suggested by figures that large employers provided in the survey.

Responses fell lower as employers felt overwhelmed of clutter (emails, virtual sessions, notifications, for example) that accompanies virtual recruiting. Still, the sample for the 2021-22 Trends report captures information for various size organizations and across nineteen major NAIC industrial categories. Evidence suggests that all employers, regardless of size and sector, project increased hiring. Employers seek candidates across all majors though among this sample respondents emphasized their search for business and engineering candidates.

The weakness in outlook occurs at the master's degrees and MBAs where hiring remains at last year's levels. However, hiring for these groups varies across size and sector.

Despite the desire to return to at least some in-person events and interviewing, employers have realized significant cost savings from virtual recruiting, especially a more efficient use of recruiting staff and personnel from the organization that assist them. Virtual recruiting events, including interviews, remain plagued by poor student attendance and inadequate technology. Nevertheless, virtual recruiting is here to stay in some hybrid form. Students need to expect to encounter digital and AI assisted technologies as part of the recruiting process.

Despite some murmurings, the number of virtual interviews per job offered extended compares to the number of in-person interviews – about seven interviews per offer. Most employers expect new hires made during the COVID period to remain three to five years before seeking new opportunities.

Employers discussed the importance of candidates having a Zoom presence that entailed being aware of their environment that employers see behind them, being prepared for the interview, and showing interest in the opportunities at the organization. Employers expect students to shoulder more of the responsibility of managing their job search, especially arriving on time and not being a “no show.”

Overall, college students seeking full-time positions or internships/co-ops can expect opportunities to be plentiful this year.

1998

Useful Survey Responses

Our employers. In planning for this year’s Recruiting Trends project, we decided to keep the survey very basic as so many employers told us that they were still adjusting to and planning around the cyclical nature of COVID-19 that still stymied longer term planning. Approximately 2500 attempted the survey with 1998 providing information that contributes to our understanding of today’s college labor market. Due to uncertainty about hiring numbers for this year, many employers opted to modify their hiring outlook with the caveat that their hiring numbers were still to be determined. This stance was particularly true for firms and establishments over 4,000 employees. Only 729 employers could provide complete hiring information at this time; the lowest number for any recent Trends report.

Fourteen percent indicated their sole responsibility centered on recruiting college graduates for full-time positions. Fifty-three percent have responsibilities for both full-time positions and intern/co-op positions (early talent programs). Another six percent are solely responsible for intern or co-op recruiting, the lowest level since the recessionary period prior to 2010. Recruiters seeking experienced talent remained higher than normal at 15 percent – reflecting organizations seeing out experienced individuals. Those filling short-term assignments of six months or less account for five percent of the respondents.

SIZE

< 100 employees – 40%
100 – 500 employees – 27%
500 – 4,000 employees – 18%
4,000 + employees – 15%

The respondents represent the rich diversity of companies and organizations seeking new college talent. Sixty-seven percent represented organizations with fewer than 500 employees and thirty-three percent with more than 500 employees. A noticeable drop in large, established organizations occurred this year that personal contacts contributed to the significant increase in media (email, twitter, LinkedIn, for example) transaction stemming from virtual recruiting platforms with no time to complete the survey.

Every major industrial sector (based on major NAIC codes) provided information for this survey. Sectors providing the highest number of respondents included Construction, Educational Services, Finance and Insurance Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Business, Professional, and Scientific Services (BPSS).

An employer from every state and several territories appeared among the respondents. States providing the highest number of respondents included California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Sectors

BPSS – 22%
Manufacturing – 12%
Education – 12%
Health – 8%
Non-profits – 7%
Government – 7%
Finance – 7%
Construction – 5%

NEARLY 50% OF RESPONDENTS INDICATE THAT THEY NOW RECRUIT THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

In a noticeable shift, more employers indicated that they were taking advantage of digital opportunities to expand their reach for talent. As one recruiter offered in a comment, “Today, we can recruit students anywhere in the country. Though we still emphasize the regions where we have offices and facilities, we are accepting candidates regardless of geographic location.” The recruiting management systems that campuses utilize to support their students’ job search are now open to all students and employers, marking the growth of a more national college labor market.

Nearly 90% of responding employers focus their recruiting at four-year public and private (not for profit) institutions. Forty-two percent also work with two-year community colleges and 34% look to for-profit institutions for talent. The number of employers seeking certificate or credentialed talent continues to grow in this survey – now at one-third of respondents. In last year’s survey many employers indicated that they would build connections with historical Black colleges and Hispanic and Asian serving institutions to achieve diversity goals. This year the number of organizations reaching out to these institutions inched up slightly to 38%.

RECRUITING IN A COVID-19 WORLD

APPROXIMATELY 82% OF RESPONDENTS INDICATED THAT THEY EMPLOYED DIGITAL OR AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN SOME STEPS OR FOR ALL OF THEIR RECRUITING PROCESS.

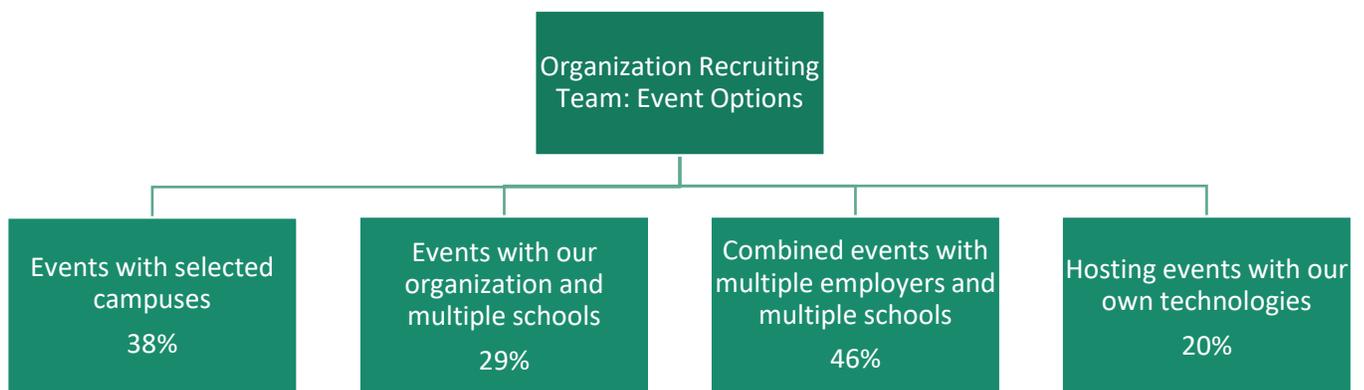
COVID-19 accelerated the adoption of virtual recruiting formats much sooner than the results from our Trends survey several years ago. In the earlier survey projections estimated that the adoption of digital technologies would occur gradually until accelerating between 2025 and 2030. Well, 2030 is now today! While some organizations may not be totally embracing virtual technologies, these technologies are here to stay and will continue to alter the recruiting process post COVID.

Digital assisted technologies provide an organization with an array of options to engage students. Four specific options describe ways that colleges and employers can arrange interactions with students.

- An organization can have tailored events with pre-selected schools. This option harks to pre-COVID recruiting where organizations used their core recruiting schools to leverage their brand through targeted events or interactions. Consider this option one-on-one recruiting management whether virtual or on-campus.
- An organization can arrange an event with multiple schools where they are the only organization in attendance. An example may find an organization requesting a career fair with several geographically close schools, like North Carolina State University, UNC Chapel Hill, Wake Forest, and Elon and selected other area campuses. In this scenario, the organization would host the virtual event with these campuses, opening to all students or students from designated academic disciplines.
- Combined virtual events with multiple schools and organizations provide organizations with opportunity to engage a diverse group of students and reduces concerns about student attendance. The BIG 10+ group serves as an example where all the BIG 10 schools host an event for all employers.
- Organizations are taking the opportunity to expand their abilities to host recruiting events through their own technologies. With their in-house technologies organizations can host virtual open houses, invite selected students to attend a “private” career fair, and conduct initial interviews. All this before taking steps to meet students face-to-face.

The options employers chose to engage in will vary widely from organization to organization with the ability to select into multiple types of events. When presented with these options nearly half of these employer representatives indicated that they would opt to participate in multiple school – multiple organization virtual events. One-on-one events resonated with more than one-third of these employers with the remaining options slightly less preferred.

Figure 1. Recruiting Options Available to Organizations During and Post COVID-19.



The advantages incurred by pursuing virtual, digital assisted recruiting practices include the more efficient use of organizational resources: specifically, more effective and efficient use of staff and the reduction of recruiting costs. Fifty-five to sixty percent of respondents indicated that efficient and effective use of recruiting team, organizational members supporting recruiting and other resources as the primary benefit. Nearly 50% also pointed to reduction in costs associated with recruiting as another benefit.

Other benefits promoted by proponents of virtual, digital approaches have not materialized as expected. Only 36% indicated that virtual events produced a more diverse applicant pool and one-third felt that students were more proactive in the virtual recruiting process. Virtual events have failed, at least at this stage, to improve student attendance at recruiting events.

Disadvantages remain deeply embedded with respect to virtual recruiting. The primary disadvantage is the loss of one-on-one connections with students that increases the difficulty of establishing early personal relationships with students challenging. The virtual process makes reading body language difficult as students' attitude and behaviors (lack of professionalism, respect and preparedness) differ in the virtual space than the personal one. However, the two more pressing problems are (1) the low student turnout at virtual events couple with the high rate of no-shows and (2) the inability of available technologies to provide the type of recruiting environments that are most productive. Employers expect technologies to develop and mature rapidly with more feedback about the virtual process but they remain frustrated in dealing with current versions of existing technologies.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents agree that the best method for college recruiting is physical presence on college campuses – the tried and proven interpersonal approach. They also recognize the reality of the current situation where the cost saving and more efficient use of organizational staff may dampen a quick return to full-out on-campus recruiting efforts. With this in mind, employers have suggestions for students and college career staff on the future; topics discussed later in this report.

FULL-TIME COLLEGE RECRUITING PLANS FOR 2021-22

Outlook Encouragingly Optimistic. While employer outlook dimmed noticeably last fall, the employers who responded to this year's survey are buoyant and resilient about the opportunities available to college students in 2021-2022. Sixty-six percent described the overall new college labor market as very good to excellent. The average rating of 3.88 is the highest reported in the survey (Figure 2). Sentiment on the outlook varies from company to company and industrial sector to industrial sector. The bottom line finds employers much more confident about the labor market conditions for pending graduates this year than last year.

**Employer
Overall
Optimism**
Very good to
excellent

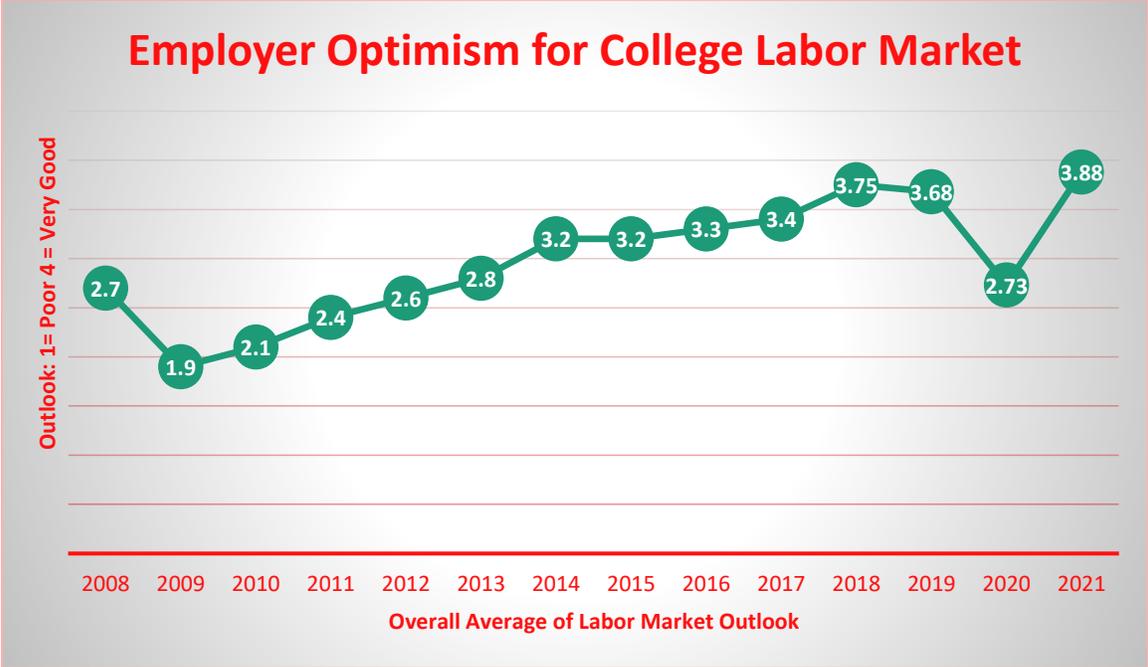
Respondents felt more optimistic about the job prospects in their own industry sector (grouped according to NAICS codes). About 75 percent described the new college labor market in their industrial sector as very good to excellent. Their average rating of 4.00 places the outlook for jobs in the "very good" range.

An ANOVA (analysis of variance) comparison by size, found a significant difference in outlook for the overall market ($F = 2.954, p=.032$). The smallest organizations (less than 99 employees) reported a lower overall outlook (mean = 3.75) than larger organizations (mean 3.95). The comparison for their industry sector outlook proved significant ($F=6.030, .000$) with smaller organizations, those with 99 or fewer employees (mean = 3.95) and 100 to 500 employees (mean = 4.09), being very optimistic but still not as optimistic as organizations with more than 500 employees (mean = 4.26).

Economic Sector Outlook
Very good to excellent

A comparison across industry sector proved inconclusive due to the small number of responses in some sectors. In a visual inspection of the means, only several sectors rated the overall outlook good (Utilities, Information Services, Arts & Entertainment, Non-profits, Accommodation and Government) with the other sectors posed between very good and excellent. The same separation of sectors occurred for outlook within the sector with the exception of Accommodation signaling they felt their sector was strengthening. Agriculture, Construction, Transportation, Education Services, and Health Services reported the most optimistic outlook for hiring new college graduates.

Figure 2. Employer Outlook for Overall College Labor Market 2008/09 through 2020-2021.





A comparison of the differences between the two ratings found:

- Two sectors rated their industry sectors lower than their rating for the overall college labor market: Leasing and Non-profit organizations.
- Several sectors rated the overall outlook and their sector’s outlook nearly the same: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Health Services and Utilities.
- Sectors with the largest difference between their sector’s outlook rating and their overall outlook rating: Accommodation (Hospitality), Arts & Entertainment, Transportation and Construction.

44%
Set to increase hiring quotas across all degrees

Hiring Intentions. Between 2011 and 2019, more than fifty percent of respondents expected to increase hiring across all degree levels. When COVID hit, this figure plummeted to only 37%. This year the number rebounded to 44%, plan to increase hiring above last year’s level. The breakdown by degree shows that 45% of employers seeking associate’s degree candidates and 45 percent seeking bachelor’s degree will increase hiring over last year. On the other hand, 33% of employers seeking associates and 28% seeking bachelor’s candidates will decrease the number they expect to hire this year.

The hiring intentions for MBAs and masters also improved but still slightly more employers expect to decrease hiring at these levels than last year. Only 40% of employers recruiting MBAs expect to increase hiring with 42% expecting to reduce the number they hire. Similarly, 36% of employers seeking masters’ degrees across all disciplines will add more positions while 42% expect to lower hiring compared to last year. Most of the latter stem from cutting back on master’s in business disciplines with the exception of accounting.

Hiring Plans for 2021 – 2022. For those organizations actively engaged in recruiting for new college, the majority report their plans are preliminary or firmly established as the number of new graduates they will hire. Some organizations report they have no specific hiring targets at the time of the survey while actively recruiting this fall. These organizations hope to have firmer plans by the end of the year (2021). Those organizations still not yet in a position to hire this year dropped to below two percent. At this time employers plan to:

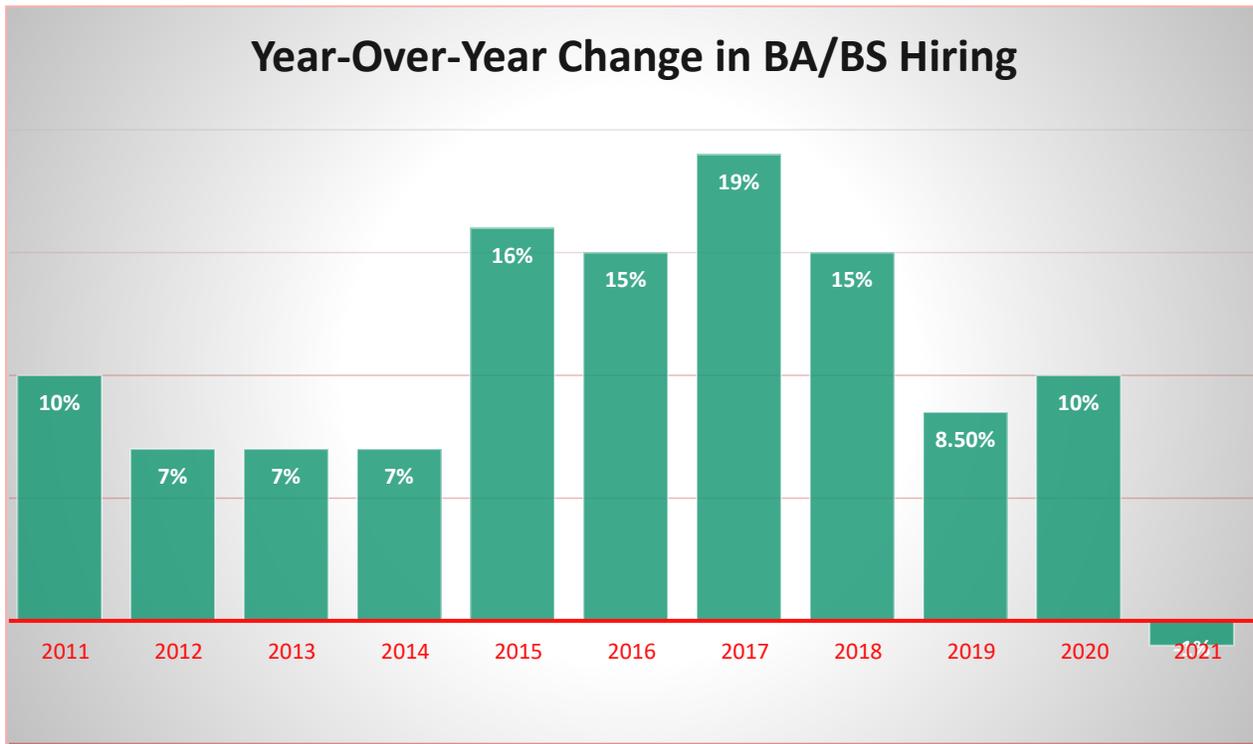
- 2% --- have no plans to hire new graduates
- 30% --- have set preliminary hiring goals for new college graduates for this year
- 35% --- have established firm hiring targets for new college graduates for this year
- 25% --- have not committed or confirmed hiring goals for this year but will actively connect with college students who seek full-time employment
- 8% --- pursuing “hiring on demand” strategy, as openings do not correspond to academic year cycle.

Two helpful observations from this breakdown in comparison to last year. The certainty among employers for making new hires improved dramatically as the percentage of those with unconfirmed hiring goals dropped 13 points and the group with established targets rose by eight and preliminary by five. The number of employers employing “just-in-time” hiring nearly doubled and continues to grow as the timing of employers’ staffing needs do not match the academic cycle. These employers can seek out students in virtual learning environments who can adjust their academic schedule to accept full-time employment, unlike their classroom-based counterparts. Employers using “just-in-time” approach stressed they would continue completion of the new hire’s degree and provide the support to do so.

HIRING FOR FULL-TIME POSITIONS: COLLEGE RECRUITING 2021-2022

The college labor market after experiencing years of solid, if not spectacular, growth stalled at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than one-quarter of employers usually committed to seeking new college talent opted to sit out the recruiting period for 2020-21 graduates. Those employers who remained active chose to either cut back slightly on their hiring plans or maintain hiring at the previous year’s level. Figure 3 presents the year-to-year change for the bachelor’s labor market to illustrate the story for this historical period of job growth. The COVID situation saw overall bachelor hiring fall slightly into a decline from the previous year though statistically the change represented no change from the previous year. So employers remained active, monitoring the COVID situation and adjusting their hiring as they obtained more information on the pandemic’s progress. This year all the signals suggest that the college labor market will be more robust with potentially higher number of opportunities than last year.

FIGURE 3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CHANGE IN THE BA/BS LABOR MARKET (2011-2021)



NOTE: AFTER REVIEWING OUR SURVEY WITH EMPLOYERS AND EVALUATING THE LOW NUMBER OF RESPONSES FOR DOCTORAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREE POSITIONS, THE DECISION WAS TO REMOVE THESE DEGREES FROM THE SURVEY THIS YEAR. WE APOLOGIZE TO THOSE WHO MAY BE LOOKING FOR THIS INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY THOSE SEEKING DVM DEGREES.

Employment opportunities for class of 2021-2022. The number of employers able to provide hiring information continues to be markedly lower than previous years. Even among those who reported definite plans to hire college talent this year and despite the drop in the number still undecided as recruiting began this fall, many employers hedged on providing their hiring information. Several employers provided thoughtful insights that suggested employers were closely monitoring the progress of the COVID Delta variant and providing time for their employees to receive the COVID vaccinations before committing to the actual numbers they expect to hire. Employers expected additional clarity in early January. Some also admitted that they could not release hiring information at this time, due to organizational policy. The largest employers were more likely to omit data this year – a change from previous years. Nearly all those who hesitated to provide numbers, however, expressed their eagerness to hire college talent and would be aggressively recruiting during the fall.

The lower number providing complete hiring information, approximately 750, presents challenges in analyzing and interpreting the results. With a small number, it becomes harder to stabilize the standard deviation when a few employers make large swings in their hiring. In examining different

categories of employers, whether by size or industry sector, low responses means that some groups results cannot be determined. Finally, lower response numbers makes it risky to generalize beyond the employers included in this study. Readers need to use this information in conjunction with other available data sources (for example, state and national job reports) to confirm what may be the hiring situation for their graduates.

Outlook. In this presentation of the hiring outlook, we excluded the top 1.5% of responses because of their significant influence on the statistics. By excluding this small number of employer (all hiring several thousand college candidates), the standard deviation is reduced by two-thirds for each degree level and total hires. These excluded employers will appear in the section that examines hires by organizational size.

Bachelor Hiring up 15%

Total hires (across all degree levels) will be up 14% compared to a year ago. All degree levels will increase from 18% for associate degrees to 6% for Masters (all non-MBA masters). With nearly all the employers seeking bachelor’s talent, hiring at this level expect to increase by 15%.

TABLE 1 ADJUSTED HIRES PER ORGANIZATION, 2021-22

	NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS	NEW HIRES 2020-21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ASSOCIATE	274	12.8	15.1	18
BACHELOR	692	32.2	37.0	15
MBA	228	6.5	6.9	10
MASTER (ALL NON-MBA PROGRAMS)	259	10.8	11.5	6
TOTAL	717 UNIQUE	41.8	47.6	14

Hiring by organizational size. Smaller organizations have contributed consistently to the strong performance of the college labor market over the past ten years. This year is no exception. Small organizations indicate they will hire approximately 10% more graduates, focusing on associates and bachelor’s degree talent. Larger companies (those with more than 500 employees) will focus primarily on bachelor’s candidates, pushing hiring at this level upward 20% compared to last year. Several of these companies commented that they either stopped hiring last year or failed to hire the numbers need, so they are playing catch-up this fall. Hiring at the MBA and masters (all non-MBA programs) is comparable to last year with larger companies indicating little expansion in job opportunities.

Mid-size to Large Employers Push BA Hiring

Employers with fewer than 100 employees indicated they would hire more associate (up 20 percent) and bachelor talent (up 5%) with a stronger push for advanced degrees (MBAs up 17% and masters up 20%).

Firms with 100 to 499 employees seek new graduates at the associates level (up 46%) and bachelor's (up 8%). Hiring at the MBA level remains unchanged from last year and master's hiring up be down slightly.

For organizations with 500 to 3,999 employees hiring accelerates at the associate's (up 23%) and bachelor's (up 22%) levels. These organizations lower their intentions at the MBA and master's level with a decline of 24% for MBAs

and 20% for masters.

The largest organizations with more than 4,000 employees focus on associate degree candidates (up 7%) with a strong emphasis at the bachelor's degree (up 26%). Employers in this group expect to hold hiring steady at MBA and lower expectations slightly at the master's levels.

TABLE 2A. HIRING INTENTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS WITH LESS THAN 99 EMPLOYEES

DEGREE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS	NEW HIRES 2020-21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ASSOCIATE	91	2.8	3.4	20
BACHELOR	254	5.3	5.6	5
MBA	59	3.5	4.1	17
MASTER (ALL NON-MBA PROGRAMS)	89	2.1	2.5	20
TOTAL	271 UNIQUE	7.3	8.2	12

TABLE 2B. HIRING INTENTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS WITH 100 TO 499 EMPLOYEES

DEGREE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS	NEW HIRES 2020-21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ASSOCIATE	95	5.2	7.6	46
BACHELOR	188	12.2	13.2	8
MBA	61	2.7	2.7	NC
MASTERS	68	7.5	7.3	-2
TOTAL	194 UNIQUE	18.0	19.9	11

TABLE 2C. HIRING INTENTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS WITH 500 TO 3,999 EMPLOYEES

DEGREE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ASSOCIATE	57	21.3	26.3	23
BACHELOR	142	67.7	82.6	22
MBA	54	6.3	4.8	-24
MASTER	59	22.5	21.8	-3
TOTAL	144 UNIQUE	86.1	103.5	20

TABLE 2D. HIRING INTENTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS WITH 4,000+ EMPLOYEES

DEGREE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ASSOCIATE	38	157.4	167.8	7
BACHELOR	120	168.7	213.2	26
MBA	62	24.0	24.0	NC
MASTER	52	53.3	52.1	-2
TOTAL	120 UNIQUE	254.2	299.7	18

Readers should use caution when interpreting the figures in Tables 2A to 2D due to the small number of responses for some response cells. These figures provide a snapshot of the current situation that you should verify through hiring trends in your area and discussions with employers or colleagues.

Hiring by economic sector (segment). Using NAIC codes, 19 major industry groups comprise for this report. All 19 provided information useful in this report. Unfortunately, upon compilation of the results, several industry groups failed to provide sufficient hiring information for inclusion in this section of the report. Sectors not included in the tables below include Oil & Gas, Utilities, Wholesale Trade, Information Services, Leasing Services, Arts & Entertainment, Accommodations (Hospitality), and Administrative Services.

Information provided by the remaining sectors for total hires, associate's and bachelor's degree levels offer the best industry-based measures for this labor market study. However, within some sectors the number of responses for one or both of these degree levels is still low. Readers please carefully consider the low number of responses when extending the expected hiring targets beyond this study

All the industry sectors indicate positive hiring for bachelor degree candidates. Only Education Services expects to lower hiring for associate degree candidates with Manufacturing unchanged from last year. The situation at the master's and MBA levels appear mixed. MBA hiring outlook improves for all sectors except Manufacturing and Health Services with no expected change for Professional, Business and Scientific Services. Master's hiring is down slightly for Manufacturing and Education Services and sharply for Health Services.

Due to data limitations, we provide insights to the subsector in only several major industry sectors. Using information for bachelor degree, hiring goals in selected subsectors can provide some additional insights.

- **Manufacturing.** The auto, aerospace, truck subsector reports hiring will be solid though it will be slightly lower than last year (-2%). The only other sector trending downward is Petroleum & Chemicals. Strength in manufacturing sector centers on Computer & Electronics (up 32%), Food & Beverage (up 13%), and Primary, Fabricated Metals (up 9%). Textile & Paper and other manufacturing organizations not classified expect to increase hiring slightly while surgical equipment subsector's hiring will remain the same as last year.
- **Professional, Business and Scientifics Services.** Strong hiring growth is expected in accounting (CPA firms) which will be up 19% from last year; Computer Services & Software up 21%; Scientific Research (all types) up 22%. Advertising, PR & Marketing firms, Management operations (such as supply chain) expect hiring to continue at last year's pace with only engineering services reporting a slight decline in the number that will be hired this year compared to 2020-21.
- **Education services.** Hiring at K-12 schools expects to increase by 21% while college and universities (non-faculty) and education support services will decline slightly.
- **Health Services:** Only laboratory services reports a slightly decline in hiring while ambulatory services (up 25%), hospitals (up 21%) and social assistance agencies (up 24%) are increasing hiring. Most of this hiring occurs at the associates and bachelors levels.

TABLE 3A. TOTAL HIRES ACROSS ALL DEGREE LEVELS FOR 2021-22 BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

INDUSTRY SEGMENT	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES	46.4	48.3	4
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL & SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	35.1	40.3	16
CONSTRUCTION	18.0	21.2	18
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	117.3	139.7	12
FINANCE AND INSURANCE	58.3	80.2	37
GOVERNMENT	55.6	73.8	33
HEALTH CARE SERVICES	163.5	178.9	9
MANUFACTURING	63.7	84.8	33
NON-PROFITS	32.4	40.6	25
RETAIL SERVICES	21.9	24.9	14
TRANSPORTATION	82.9	98.0	18

Industry sector hiring intentions differ by degree level. The following tables present the outlooks for the associates, bachelors, MBA and master’s degree levels. Sectors not included in the tables failed to meet the criteria we use for including information.

PLEASE BE CAUTIOUS IN INTERPRETING THE REPORTED CHANGES. THEY REFLECT ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF EACH SECTOR AND ARE NOT GENERALIZABLE. REMEMBER SMALL NUMBERS PRODUCE LARGE PERCENTAGE CHANGES THAT MAY OVERSTATE THE HIRING OUTLOOK FOR THAT DEGREE.

TABLE 3B. HIRING TARGETS FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE GRADUATES 2021-2022 BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

INDUSTRY SEGMENT	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL & SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	9.1	11.1	22
CONSTRUCTION	3.1	6.4	100
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	67.4	60.1	-10
GOVERNMENT	37.7	41.3	10
HEALTH CARE SERVICES	78.8	98.4	25
MANUFACTURING	11.5	11.6	NC
NON-PROFITS	6.2	13.0	100

TABLE 3C. HIRING TARGETS FOR BACHELOR DEGREE GRADUATES 2021-22 BY SECTOR

INDUSTRY SEGMENT	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES	40.8	41.2	1
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL & SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	35.1	40.3	14
CONSTRUCTION	15.0	17.3	15
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	117.3	139.7	19
FINANCE AND INSURANCE	46.4	64.7	39
GOVERNMENT	30.1	41.3	50
HEALTH CARE SERVICES	89.7	102.8	15
MANUFACTURING	53.2	74.1	39
NON-PROFITS	26.8	31.3	17
RETAIL SERVICES	18.5	23.5	27
TRANSPORTATION	61.4	78.6	28

TABLE 3D. HIRING TARGETS FOR ADVANCED DEGREES FOR 2021-20212 BY SECTOR

INDUSTRY SEGMENT	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
MBA			
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL & SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	8.1	8.1	NC
FINANCE & INSURANCE	8.4	10.0	19
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	14.1	17.1	21
GOVERNMENT	10.5	10.0	5
HEALTH SERVICES	22.9	13.4	-42
MANUFACTURING	6.9	6.2	-9
MASTERS			
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL & SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	18.8	14.8	27
EDUCATION SERVICES	35.3	34.7	-2
FINANCE & INSURANCE	10.1	16.9	68
GOVERNMENT	8.8	11.6	32
HEALTH SERVICES	36.4	25.8	-29
MANUFACTURING	11.0	10.9	-1
NON-PROFITS	32.4	40.6	25

Academic discipline outlook. This question taps into the disciplines from which employers are likely to seek candidates for full-time positions. Employers select all the academic disciplines of interest from a defined list of academic groups. To interpret Table 4 correctly, readers need to understand that employers may be only anticipating hiring one graduate from the group; in other words, the average number of hires for an academic group comprises majors from other groups. Consider employers seeking business graduates, these employers' average hires for 2021-22 is 53.6 hires of which at least one will be a business major. Again, the change in hiring reflects the organizations hiring targets not specifically the target for the academic group.

Because of the influence of the 1.5% hiring very large numbers, we have provided adjusted figures with these employers removed. For academic groups with small differences in percentage change between the entire figure and the adjusted figure, the excluded employers had little impact on the unadjusted mean. (Business serves as an example.) If the adjusted percentage difference is large, several of the excluded organizations were likely seeking candidates in these disciplines. (Communication serves as an example.)

Employers expressed an interest in all the academic groups from which they could select. More organizations indicated a preference for business, engineering, and computer science/IT and “all majors.” Table 4 presents the hiring change according to bachelor level academic disciplines. For no academic group did employers report a decline in hiring this year. Graduates across all academic majors can expect increased opportunities for full-time positions.

TABLE 4. ORGANIZATION HIRING INTENTION BY ACADEMIC MAJORS IN THEIR BACHELOR TALENT POOL

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE	AVERAGE HIRED IN 2020/21	AVERAGE EXPECTED TO HIRE IN 2021/22	EXPECTED CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ALL MAJORS	95.00	120.7	27
ADJUSTED	49.2	57.2	16
ACCOUNTING	71.6	94.9	32
ADJUSTED	53.3	60.5	13
BUSINESS (INCL. FINANCE, LOGISTICS, MARKETING, HR, SALES, RELATED)	45.1	53.6	19
ADJUSTED	41.8	48.4	16
COMPUTER SCIENCE/IT	62.0	78.4	26
ADJUSTED	48.0	54.7	14
ENGINEERING (ALL DISCIPLINES)	47.2	61.5	30
ADJUSTED	29.8	33.3	12
COMMUNICATION, PR, ADVERTISING	68.2	91.5	34
ADJUSTED	47.0	51.8	10
DATA ANALYTICS, INFORMATIONSCIENCE, STATISTICS, HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTIONS	70.1	94.9	35
ADJUSTED	51.7	60.5	17
NATURAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	82.3	104.3	27
ADJUSTED	45.1	49.2	9

SOCIAL SCIENCES	51.1	62.8	23
ADJUSTED	49.1	53.7	9
ARTS & HUMANITIES	67.7	83.9	24
ADJUSTED	64.3	67.6	5
EDUCATION (SPECIAL EDUCATION, PRE-K, K, ELEMENTARY)	73.6	91.9	25
ADJUSTED	53.2	60.51	14
HEALTH (INCLUDING NURSING, DIETETICS, SOCIAL WORK, TECHNICIANS, SPECIALISTS)	85.2	103.7	22
ADJUSTED	39.7	44.7	12
CONSTRUCTION, AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, & AGRI-BUSINESS, NATURAL RESOURCES	30.9	39.2	27
ADJUSTED	29.3	32.6	11
MAJORS NOT LISTED IN ABOVE CATEGORIES	22.7	31.8	38
ADJUSTED	20.7	23.8	15

Comparisons by Location. Location plays an important role in shaping the labor market whether employers recruit nationally or focus within specific regions of the U.S. Respondents first indicated whether they recruited nationally (across the U.S.) or within specific regions of the country. While regional employers are likely to identify recruiting in only one region, some employers do recruit in multiple regions. The number of employers indicating that they were recruiting across the U.S. spiked this year. Numerous employers commented that digital technologies, plus open access to any student registered in college employer recruiting platforms (Handshake, for example), provide opportunities to connect with students almost anywhere. Some employers qualified their statement by adding that they still concentrated in regions the organization had offices and or facilities.

Both national and regional employers are reporting strong growth for associate and bachelor candidates. The outlook for MBA and master graduates is mixed. National employers expect these markets to soften with slightly few opportunities than last year. Regional employers, on the other hand, will maintain MBA hiring at current levels and increase master's hires by 13%.

TABLE 5A. OUTLOOK FOR NATIONALLY-ORIENTED RECRUITING

DEGREE LEVEL	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ASSOCIATE	60.5	65.5	8
BACHELOR	87.5	110.1	26
MBA	14.3	14.0	-2
MASTER	28.9	27.7	-4
TOTAL HIRES	125.0	148.3	19

TABLE 5B. OUTLOOK FOR REGIONALLY-ORIENTED RECRUITING

DEGREE LEVEL	NEW HIRES 2020/21 (AVG.)	NEW HIRES ANTICIPATED 2021/22 (AVG.)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 (%)
ASSOCIATE	6.9	9.3	34
BACHELOR	17.4	19.6	12
MBA	3.5	3.5	NC
MASTER	7.6	8.5	13
TOTAL HIRES	22.8	26.2	15

Institutional Type. Responding organizations indicated what type of institutions that they recruited talent. The vast majority of employers recruit at 4-year public and private (non-for-profit) institutions. In summary, their hiring activity looks like:

- **Credentials and Certificates.** One-third of the organizations indicated they seek individuals who have completed credential or certificate programs. We do not capture the number of credential/certificate hires anticipated. We are monitoring trends in employers seeking these individuals.
- **2-year public institutions.** Forty-two percent of the organizations indicated that they actively recruit at public community colleges. Their average number of hires for 2-year degrees averages 40 hires per organization – an 18% increase from last year.
- **4-year public & private (nfp).** Eighty-nine percent of organizations indicated that they actively recruit at these schools. The average number of bachelor hire is approximately 59 per organization; increase of 24%. MBA hiring is expected to decrease by 6% and masters by 3% compared to last year.

- **2 & 4-year private (for profit).** Thirty-four percent of employers indicated that they actively recruited at these institutions where 2-yr degree hiring is up 17% and bachelor's hiring is up 24% compared to last year. Note: not all those these hires will come from private institutions.
- **Institutions serving underrepresented students (HBCUs, for example).** Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicate they actively recruit at these institutions. For employer connecting with these campuses, bachelor hiring increases by 28% (an average of 122 per organization). Very large companies reported being more active at these schools than other size groups. Note: not all these hires will come from underserved campuses.

Summary. We have examined the hiring targets through several perspectives (organizational size, industry sector, recruiting scope, and academic discipline. In each case, the results confirm that this year's outlook for college hiring is quite promising. We quickly pursued another angle by looking at the percentage change in total hiring, sorting percentage change into four groups: negative change, no change in hiring this year over last, positive hiring changes of less than 100%, and positive hiring changes of more than 100%. Examining the bachelor hires the results showed:

- Negative changes: bachelor degree hiring will decrease by 21%.
- No change in hiring: bachelor degree hiring will increase 1% as employers reduce advanced degree targets slightly, moving them to the bachelor's level.
- Positive change <100%: bachelor hiring will increase by 35%.
- Positive change >100%: bachelor hiring will increase by 200%. The employers in this group tend to have fewer than 500 employees.

WITH THIS INSIGHT FROM RESPONDENTS WE EXPECT THE COLLEGE LABOR MARKET WILL BE QUITE ROBUST THIS YEAR. THIS IS A CAUTIOUS PREDICTION. THOSE EMPLOYERS WHO INDICATED THEY WERE AGGRESSIVELY RECRUITING BUT DID NOT PROVIDE HIRING NUMBERS MUDDY THE OUTLOOK. THIS GROUP IS APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SIZE AS THE GROUP THAT REPORTED HIRING NUMBERS. WITH THEIR DATA, THE RESULTS PRESENTED IN THIS SECTION COULD SHIFT EITHER UPWARD OR DOWNWARD. SO WE CANNOT CONFIDENTLY ESTIMATE THE GROWTH IN FULL-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS ALL DEGREES, BUT THE INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE BACHELOR'S LABOR MARKET, IN PARTICULAR, WILL INCREASE BETWEEN 10% AND 20% THIS YEAR.

STARTING SALARY OFFERS

Starting salary. Due to the continued uncertainty throughout the economy and various pressures on wages, the survey repeated last year's question: Will starting salaries increase, remain the same as last year, or decrease. Last year employers held the line on salary increases with 84% indicating salaries will remain the same. For this year, more employers expect to increase starting salary offers.

- 47% -- starting salary offers will remain the same as last year
- 53% -- starting salary offers will increase this year
- <.5% -- starting salary offers will decrease this year

Comparisons across academic disciplines provided several interesting insights. For business and engineering disciplines, for instance, slightly more employers expect to maintain starting salaries at current levels (51%) while for accounting, computer science/IT, communications, and social science and health services slightly more employers expect to increase their starting salary offers.

TABLE 6. EXPECTED STARTING SALARY OFFER CHANGES BY DISCIPLINE 2021-22

DISCIPLINES	MAINTAIN STARTING SALARY OFFERS (%)	INCREASE STARTING SALARY OFFERS (%)
ALL MAJORS – CONSIDER ANY APPLICANT	49	51
ACCOUNTING	42	58
BUSINESS	51	49
COMPUTER SCIENCE/IT	47	52
ENGINEERING	51	49
COMMUNICATION (INCLUDING PR & PUBLIC RELATIONS)	45	55
DATA ANALYTICS/STATISTICS	48	52
SOCIAL SCIENCES	45	55
NATURAL & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	49	50
ARTS & HUMANITIES	60	40
EDUCATION	48	51
HEALTH SCIENCES	38	62
CONSTRUCTION/AGRICULTURE	46	54
MAJORS NOT INCLUDED ABOVE	48	51

INTERNSHIPS, CO-OPS AND EARLY TALENT PROGRAMS

COVID-19 played havoc with employers' ability to maintain their early talent programs, in particular internships and co-ops, in 2020-21. Some employers waived hosting students while many attempted to sustain their programs through virtual assignments. This year employers appear ready to re-engage with students through providing professional development opportunities with assignments generally located at organizations' facilities.

THIRTY-SIX PERCENT OF EMPLOYERS EXPECT TO HIRE MORE STUDENTS FOR EARLY TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAN LAST YEAR.

According to employers this year, 82% will employ the same number of students or increase that number from last year.

EARLY TALENT PROGRAM INTENTIONS	PERCENT
NOT EMPLOYING ANY INTERNS OR STUDENTS THIS YEAR	11
EMPLOYING THE SAME NUMBER AS LAST YEAR	46
EMPLOYING MORE STUDENTS THAN LAST YEAR	36
EMPLOYING FEWER STUDENTS THAN LAST YEAR	4
TRYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT	11

For the majority of spring and summer internship assignments are on-site. A few employers still have not decided whether assignments will be virtual or on-site but less than 5% expect to host all students virtually.

WORK ASSIGNMENT LOCATION	PERCENT
ALL ASSIGNMENTS IN-HOUSE (ON-SITE)	46
MIXED APPROACH: SOME STUDENTS ON VIRTUAL ASSIGNMENTS AND SOME ON-SITE (INCLUDES ROTATION ARRANGEMENTS)	28
UNCERTAIN ON ASSIGNMENT LOCATION AT THIS TIME	16
ALL ASSIGNMENTS VIRTUAL	5
OTHER OPTIONS	4

PRE-COVID REDUX

As college recruiting hopefully emerges from the disruptions and adjustments caused by COVID pandemic, questions emerge that hark back to days prior. On-campus recruiting efforts to establish personal relationship with students remains the preferred approach to building and sustaining a talent pipeline. Nevertheless, digital technologies have deeply penetrated the recruiting process with employers making heavy investments in these technologies. The genie has escaped the bottle and is not going back – returning to the good old days (if they ever existed). The role of digital and AI assisted technologies needs to be acknowledged and accepted by all parties. Several of our questions this year attempted to soothe the gap between on-campus and virtual recruiting.

Virtual interviews: How many will it take? A question posed to CERI over the past two years concerns the number of virtual interviews does an organization have to conduct per one offer made to a candidate. Among the employers participating in several discussion groups, we heard a mixed response. Some extorted that they held fewer interviews. They claim that they know more about potential candidates before the interview process starts with profiles on college employment portals or LinkedIn. More pre-sorting of candidates translates into fewer interviews before the extending of offers. Others complained of hosting more interviews to find the right candidate. The number of interviews varied organization to organization, depending on the type of position. Positions requiring very specific skills or fit within the organization seemed to require more interviews. Large organizations were prone to interviewing more candidates (possibly, because they have more staff and resources) before extending offers.

On average an organization conducts 7 - 8 virtual interviews per offer made

We asked respondents several questions concerning the number of virtual interviews they held per offer extended. Nearly 70% indicated that they held the same number of interviews virtually as they did in-person. While 9% mentioned holding fewer interviews, slightly more than 20% noted that they held more virtual interviews.

When asked to provide the number of virtual interviews per offer, the descriptive statistics indicated a mean = 7.7 and a median = 5. In other words, 50% of respondents held one to five virtual interviews per hire. The other half required six or more interviews with about 15% of all organizations indicating that they required more than 10 interviews (some as many as 20 to, 30) to arrive at an offer. Interestingly, size made no difference in the number of virtual interviews held. The smallest organizations (fewer than 100 employees) averaged 7.95 and the largest (more than 25,000 employees) averaged 7.90.

However, industry showed a significant difference in virtual interviews held ($F=2.803$, $p=.000$). Organizations that many campuses are most familiar with because of their visibility on-campus tend to hold more interviews, especially financial & insurance firms, manufacturing companies, leasing agencies, utilities, and professional, business services. Establishments. Five groups represent the spread across the virtual interviewing landscape based upon industry sectors.

- 5 to 6 Virtual Interviews per Offer
 - Health Services
 - Administrative Services
 - Education Services
 - Non-profit Organizations
 - Oil & Gas
- 6 to 7 Virtual Interviews per Offer
 - Arts & Entertainment
 - Information Services
 - Transportation
 - Government
- 7 Virtual Interviews per Offer
 - Accommodations (Hospitality)
 - Retail
- 8 to 9 Virtual Interviews per Offer
 - Utilities
 - Professional, Business & Scientific Services
 - Wholesale Trade
- 10 or more Virtual Interviews per Offer
 - Finance & Insurance
 - Leasing
 - Manufacturing

An ancient rule-of-thumb in college recruiting is that it takes seven interviews (based upon a full on-campus interview schedule) per offer. Virtual interviewing has not changed this rule. Thus, we have not found any evidence that virtual interviewing is hindering the recruiting process.

Performing in the box! I first heard this phrase in a discussion with a group of employers as they reflected on their recruiting processes at the end of the first full year operating under COVID guidelines (Spring 2021). One employer expressed concern about students' awareness of how they came across in the Zoom box or performing in the box! Employers jumped in with anecdotes about terrible virtual interviews, pointing out inappropriate backgrounds, distractions, inattentiveness, and lack of preparedness. In probing their engagement with students in virtual settings, employers reassured us that not all students displayed issues in the box but problems were common.

To capture wider input on employer experiences with candidates in virtual environments, the survey posed several questions on describing the typical candidate met during a virtual event. Eleven statements captured the most common concerns provided in our discussions with several groups of employers. Employers in this study expressed the biggest concern over candidates' lack of preparedness, level of interest in position under consideration and lack of flexibility in their expectations. Similarly, candidates appeared to be comfortable with the digital technologies employed in virtual interviews. The statements follow from most to least concern for employers.

Student willing to adjust (flexible) expectations based on job requirements (not at all flexible to extremely flexible)

- **34% Very Flexible**
- **38% Moderately Flexible**
- **19% Not Flexible at all**

Student prepared for virtual interview or event (not well prepared to extremely well prepared)

- **35% Very Well Prepared**
- **49% Moderately Well Prepared**
- **16% Not Well Prepared**

Student expressed interest in position or opportunities available (not at all interested to extremely interested)

- **42% Very Interested**
- **41% Moderately Interested**
- **16% Not interested**

Student open-minded about opportunities and potential career pathways (not at all open-minded to extremely open-minded)

- **46% Very Open Minded**
- **36% Moderately Open Minded**
- **17% Not Open Minded**

Student awareness of digital environment (appropriate background, minimal distractions, appearance) (not at all aware to extremely aware)

- **45% Very Aware of digital environment**
- **38% Moderately Aware of digital environment**
- **17% Not Aware of digital environment**

Student's professional demeanor during event (not professional at all to extremely professional)

- **46% Often Displays Professional Demeanor**
- **45% Sometime Displays Professional Demeanor**
- **9% Slightly Displays Professional Demeanor**

Student recognized verbal cues during event (never recognized to cues to always-recognized cues)

- **59% Often Recognizes Verbal Cues**
- **35% Sometimes Recognizes Verbal Cues**
- **4% Rarely Recognizes Verbal Cues**

Student eye contact with you or organization's representative (never made eye contact to always-maintained eye contact)

- **66% Often Make Eye Contact**
- **28% Sometimes Make Eye Contact**
- **4% Rarely Make Eye Contact**

Student's communication -- inarticulate or clear & concise (never clear or concise to always clear and concise)

- **64% Often Clear and Concise**
- **34% Sometimes Clear and Concise**
- **2% Never Clear and Concise**

Student appeared distracted (i.e. looking at phone) or attentive during virtual event (never attentive to always attentive)

- **77% Often Attentive**
- **20% Sometimes Attentive**
- **3% Rarely Attentive**

Student's level of confidence/comfort in digital environment (never comfortable to always comfortable)

- **78% Always Comfortable with technology**
- **20% Sometimes Comfortable with technology**
- **2% Rarely Comfortable with technology**

Assisting students for digital recruiting. Career professional prepare students to participate in all aspects of digital/virtual recruiting. Even with the likelihood that on-campus events will likely reappear on campus later this academic year and certainly by next year, students will continue to engage employers through digital technologies and participate in virtual events. During discussions with employers, we asked for their suggestions on how to prepare students as they to engage employers recruiting process as it unfurls after COVID. From all their suggestions ten were presented to respondents in an attempt to garner the breadth of support for these options. Two suggestions dealt specifically with technology and eight with actions of the student.

A technology driven option encouraged **candidates to be more proactive by reaching out to organizations they wished to work for, requesting a video call to connect and build rapport with recruiting team.** Despite the steady stream of emails, virtual interviews, zoom meeting that clutter throughout recruiters' media network, 59% of respondents supported the idea of proactive students seeking connections. Only 24% took a neutral stance at this time and 16% indicating this strategy was not appealing.

As more organizations adopt digital and AI technologies, career center professionals should convey a strong message to **candidates to expect to interact with AI driven tools (chatbots, software programs that pass as human, automated applicant processes)** and simply not the virtual interviewing and event

technologies currently in use. Forty-five percent of respondents agreed that, moving forward, AI assisted tools would be more likely involved in recruiting and students have to accept this reality. Twenty-six percent remained neutral on the role of AI tools and 29% disagreed that AI tools would become more prevalent.

Employers recognize it is hard to stand out in a crowd, especially in a short virtual setting. Seventy-three percent of respondents encourage career centers to work with candidates who **need to be more assertive/creative in finding ways to help them stand out during virtual recruiting events**. Only 19% stood neutral on this suggestion while 7% disagreed.

In any interview situation, candidates have a short time to convey the points they want to make with their interviewer. In digital environments, the time can be even shorter. Thus, it is important for career centers to work with students to **hone critical communication skills where responses to recruiter questions may take no longer than 20 to 30 seconds or 3 to 4 sentences to get one's thoughts across**. Seventy-eight percent of employers agreed about the necessity in honing communication skills while 16% remained neutral and 6% disagreed.

COVID has affected every step of the recruiting process with many employers constantly having to make adjustments given the situation at any given moment. This state of flux requires patience from all parties in the recruiting process. Employers express hope that career centers would convey to candidates **the need to be patient with their human resource staff, such as giving extra time to get back to them, as organizations are still managing changes to COVID**. Eighty percent of employers agreed with this request. About 11% remain neutral and 9% disagreed with the necessity of counseling patience.

One of the problems mentioned in the previous section was the lack of interest in the opportunities available at an organization when coming to the interview. Being better prepared in terms of knowledge about the organization and their available full-time positions would serve as the foundation for a solid interview experience whether virtual or in-person. Employers would like career centers to **provide guidance to candidates for conducting solid research on the exact type of location, sector, organization, function, role and salary that would be acceptable to them before searching for a job**. Eighty-three percent of employers support this strategy with career centers taking the lead on assisting students gain a better understanding of exactly what they would like in a position and whether the available positions are a match. Eleven percent remain neutral on this strategy with 6% in disagreement.

Even though students make an effort to research prior to starting the recruiting process, they need to remain flexible about aspects of the positions they pursue, realizing not everything they desire immediately in a job will be on the table. Career centers can assist students through discussion on the **importance of remaining receptive to flexible job requirements, such as start dates, different locations, specific role requirements and compensation, so that they will have an advantage in the recruiting process**. Eighty-nine of respondents agree with this strategy of remaining flexible as it provides more latitude for matching the candidate with the best opportunity at their organization. Only 8% remain neutral and 3% disagreed with this strategy.

With the economy still faced with uncertainty (whether the virus, China, or inflation), each of us has to adapt and move forward. Employers believe it is critical **that candidates find ways to express their adaptability, as it says a lot about their expectations.** Career center professionals can offer assistance in emphasizing the importance of being adaptable during the recruiting process and the importance employers place on being adaptable. Ninety-two percent of respondents agree with this strategy with only 7% neutral and one percent disagreeing.

Anything can go wrong during a virtual session. **To minimize potential mishaps, candidates should always test out functionality of their videoconferencing app in advance.** Ninety-five percent of employers strongly recommend that candidates always test their technology prior to engaging in a virtual event. While this step seems like a no-brainer, all of us sometime fail to pre-check our technology prior to entering an event. It makes good sense.

Ninety-eight percent of employers stressed that **candidates should bring the same level of enthusiasm and professional communication to digital events as in-person ones.** Most of us do not relish connecting through virtual technologies if face-to-face options were available. The reality moving forward is the virtual is here to stay – and all of us, especially students, have to accept that fact. Many of the initial contacts students will have with employers will be virtually. Failing to show enthusiasm (do the research) has a long tail – it will carry over into those coveted in-person connections, harming further consideration for a position the student may dearly want

Impressions post-COVID. Various aspects of college recruiting will change after the country gains better control over COVID. In the 2020-21 Trends report, employers discussed what might aspects of recruiting might change and what aspects might revert to pre-COVID practices. For most, it was too early to tell and it remains too early to know what will stick. We know digital practices will remain in place and probably dominate college recruiting. Yet, technological changes trigger attitudinal and behavioral changes for students, human resource, and career center professionals. One of my favorite ways of expressing the changes that follow technological disruption is adapted from David Mindell of MIT. The consequences of technology on recruiting results in five key changes to the entire recruiting process.

- Change recruiting technologies and you change recruiting tasks.
- Change recruiting tasks and you change the nature of recruiting.
- Change the nature of recruiting and you change the type of professionals (employer and career services) required to complete recruiting work.
- Change enough of the professionals and the entire recruiting process changes.
- Change the recruiting process and you change how the system that candidates and professionals are in operates.

Through our discussions with employers, we identified SEVERAL changes they see clearly emerging as concerns over COVID ease. These changes were included in the survey to capture input from a wider audience of employers.

As technology, platforms that drive the employer student connection open to all potential actors and as more events host multiple schools and employers, **far more job postings and recruiting events are available for students to connect with employers.** In the evolution of these processes, the college labor

market is shifting to a national market rather than directed through a myriad of individual college campuses. Even though students often set geographical boundaries around their job search, they now have the opportunity to pursue jobs almost anywhere.

56% of employers agree that students have more opportunities (25% neutral)

These emerging arrangements mean employers have to navigate various digital resources (LinkedIn, Handshake, applicant-tracking systems) and respond to a constant flow of emails and virtual engagements. Their **challenge is to break through the virtual clutter to find the best candidates for their organization.** The virtual clutter will only increase.

74% of employers agree the virtual clutter is a major challenge

Students expect career services to orchestrate recruiting events and arrange sessions with employers. In an open environment, students will seek out employment opportunities with or respond to invitations from organizations without direct assistance from employers. Thus, **students must accept more responsibility to self-manage opportunities that interest them.**

84% of employers agree that students need to accept more responsibility

In taking more responsibility, **students will need to be more disciplined in managing their time to engage successfully with employers.** Being late or worse, a no-show, to an event or interview they scheduled with an employer sends signals to employers about potential behaviors and attitudes.

71% of employers believe students need more time management discipline

Career centers will need to assist students in establishing their job search protocols and teaching them to manage job opportunities identified through their campus employment system.

81% of employers believe campus career professionals need to assist students in mastering new digital recruiting arrangements

Career centers must be intentional in communicating how students can hone and master their digital presence.

80% of employers agree career centers need to be intentional with students

RETAINING NEW HIRES: HAS COVID CAUSED A SHIFT?

Employers always wrestle with retention issues among recent hires. COVID certainly threw a possible monkey wrench into an organization's ability to retain their young hires made during the height of the COVID pandemic. The reason stems from their own advice (see Recruiting Trends 2020-21) that career professionals, parents, and peers echoed. COVID temporarily closed access to positions that pending graduates were anxious to obtain. Employers encouraged candidates to accept positions that were available thus gaining entry to the workforce. Once their desired positions opened, they could move into them. This strategy opens the door for the possible rapid turnover of many recent hires as they scramble for their desired job.

We attempted to examine the possible onset of turnover by asking employers to provide their expected tenure for hires made during the pandemic period of spring 2019 through spring 2021 and what they expected tenure to be for those hired after COVID. The two figures failed to produce statistically or meaningful differences. One explanation rests on the fact that we have not had enough separation from COVID. Thus, most employers are still operating under COVID conditions.

We obtained reliable figures on the retention outlook for hires made throughout the COVID period (2019 to present). Employers expect to retain hires from this period, regardless of degree level, from three to five years. Small differences appeared between degree levels:

- Associate Degree Hires: Average Retention 4.2 years, Median 3 years, and Mode 2 and 5 years
- Bachelor Degree Hires: Average Retention 4.4 years, Median 4 years, and Mode 2, 3, and 5 years
- Master's Degree Hires: Average Retention 5.1 years, Median 5 years, and Mode 5 years
- MBA Hires: Average Retention 5.3 years, Median 5 years, and Mode 5 years.

Comparisons by size and industry sector provided significant differences in expected retention. Size ($F=2.096$, $p = .05$) revealed that organizations with 1500 to 10,000 employees expect their COVID hires to stay for 6 to 7 years. Organizations with fewer than 1500 employees and large employers (over 10,000 employees) expect their COVID hires to remain at their organizations 4 to 5 years.

Industry sector differences ($F=2.270$, $p=.002$) showed that sectors separated into three groups:

- Long Tenure Expectations (6 to 10 years)
 - Educational Services
 - Construction
 - Agriculture
 - Utilities
- Short Tenure Expectations (2 to 3.5 years)
 - Arts & Entertainment
 - Non-profits
 - Leasing
 - Retail
 - Transportation
 - Health Services

- Mid Tenure Expectations (4 to 5 years)
 - Finance & Insurance
 - Manufacturing
 - Professional, Business & Scientific Services
 - Accommodations (Hospitality)

A more general question asked respondents to consider the hires they are making today and compare their expected tenure to those hired prior to COVID. Fifty-eight percent expect tenure to remain the same while 13% expect tenure of today's hires to increase. Nearly 30%, however, believe the tenure of today's hires will be shorter than pre-COVID hires.

When asked to look at possible tenure changes across functions with the organization, 20% of those organizations with engineering, computer/IT and technology functions expect COVID hires to have shorter tenure (compared to two-thirds who expect tenure to remain the same). For business and professional services and operation and management functions employers largely believe the tenure in these functions will remain unchanged.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This section brings the conclusion to the 51st edition of Recruiting Trends. It also marks the conclusion of my 25 years of managing this report. My involvement with Trends has enriched my professional life in many ways through the close relationships with colleagues, stimulating discussions about student success and future of recruiting, opportunities to produce scholarly work on the transition from college to work and influence of work-integrated learning. I have clearly been blessed by all the opportunities you have provided me. However, it is time to step aside and hope others will step forward to continue the advancement of research in our field. I deeply cherish each of you for your support of and devotion to the work of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute and hope you found benefits it what we have been able to produce. I will never be able to replace the comraderies and relationships built over my 36 years working with you. To each of you – thank you.

I am not completely leaving the scene. I am still working with several former graduate assistants who are climbing faculty tenure tracks to advance several research projects that remain incomplete. You can anticipate several research publications out of these efforts. The best way to learn of our activities is to occasionally surf the CERI website (www.ceri.msu.edu) where our recent publications appear. In addition, the complete archives of the work of CERI since 1985 is being curated and starting to appear on our website. Be sure to check it out! You can also anticipate Dr. Heather Maietta and my newest book, due out in the spring, on students who transfer and career engagement.

Best wishes for successful recruiting in 2021-22.