

News Release

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Board of Governors for Higher Education
Department of Higher Education
State of Connecticut



For Immediate Release

College Class of 2008 Largest in State's History

HARTFORD, May 5 — In some brighter news for the economy, Connecticut colleges are expected to graduate the largest number of students in the state's history, based on a profile of the graduating class of 2008 by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education.

Based on previous years' trends, some 36,000 individuals are expected to graduate from the state's public and independent colleges this spring with degrees ranging from one-year certificates to first-professional awards such as medicine and law. Of this total:

- About half will get their bachelor's degrees, followed by those with master's (26%) and associate's (14 %).
- Fifty-two percent will graduate from the state's public colleges and universities, with the vast majority of whom will remain in the state for jobs.
- Most will have majored in one of five fields that have been the most popular choices over the past 10 years: business, health, education, social sciences/history and the liberal arts.
- The class will include more than 1,000 new nurses, more than 3,600 new teachers and about 3,500 with degrees in the sciences – biology, physics, engineering and computer science.
- Nearly 18 percent are from minority groups, reflecting the state's increasing diversity but still behind their representation in the general population.
- Some sixty percent are women, retaining their majority status first reached in the late 1970's.
- Undergraduates with loans will owe an average of \$23,400 compared to a national average of just under \$20,000.

These figures are estimates, based on past enrollment and degree statistics compiled by the Higher Education Department. Exact counts of 2008 degree awards have not yet been reported to the Department by colleges.

“This is positive news for our colleges as well as our state,” stated Higher Education Commissioner Michael Meotti. “Connecticut is known for its highly educated workforce, standing third in the country for its percent of adults holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The Class of 2008 will no doubt help us retain our competitive position.”

(MORE)

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State Labor Commissioner Patricia H. Mayfield commented, "The outlook for our college graduates is very promising. In today's economy, the value of education has been proven, and students earning degrees or training in high-demand fields such as education, health care, engineering, finance, law, and precision manufacturing and technology should see a strong need for their skills in the workplace."

The Connecticut Business and Industry Association described a positive climate for graduates as well.

"Graduates looking to remain in Connecticut will have an easier time finding employment than graduates in other states, where the slowing national economy has had more of negative impact," said Peter Gioia, CBIA vice president and economist. "That's good news for Connecticut, which lost more 25- to 34-year-olds than any other state since 1990. It's also a boon for businesses that need a dynamic labor force — including educated, skilled young workers — to compete and be successful in the future."

Gioia noted that this year's graduates will find the greatest number of jobs in a variety of traditional careers, including manufacturing, sales, accounting and customer service fields. Businesses of all sizes, from large, multi national corporations to small companies, are looking to grow, increase their workforce and expand in the state.

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