



REVERSING TRENDS, CONNECTICUT RETAINS THE MAJORITY OF ITS NEW COLLEGE FRESHMEN

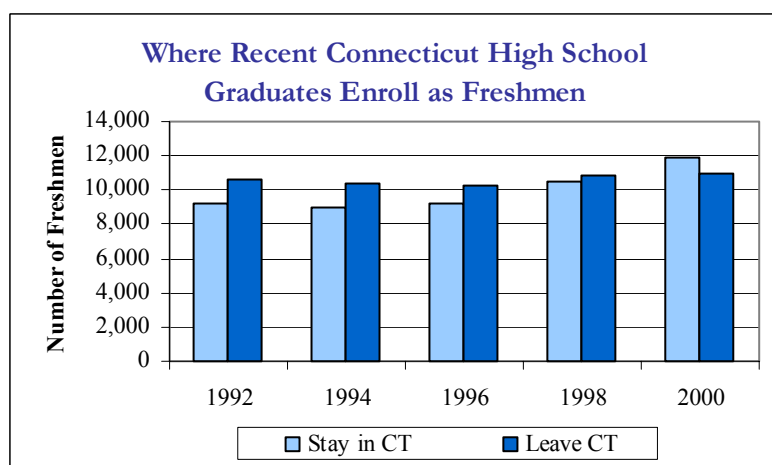
For the first time since 1992 when regular data collection began, a slight majority (52%) of Connecticut's recent high-school graduates chose to attend college in state. This reverses the historical "brain drain" in which most Connecticut freshmen* left the state for colleges elsewhere (see Table 1 and graph below).

MIGRATION. In fall 2000, some 22,862 Connecticut high school graduates enrolled as college freshmen in the U.S. Of that total, 11,874 (52%) enrolled in Connecticut colleges with the remaining 10,988 (48%) choosing colleges in other states and the District of Columbia.

Table 1: Migration of Connecticut Freshmen

	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
Total remaining in CT	9,179	9,011	9,222	10,453	11,874
Total attending outside CT	10,621	10,343	10,282	10,898	10,988
Total in the U.S.	19,800	19,354	19,504	21,351	22,862
Percent remaining in CT	46%	47%	47%	49%	52%

This differs from the 1990's when the majority of Connecticut freshmen left the state for college, although the share remaining in state rose consistently from 46 percent in 1992 to 52 percent in 2000. (This data is collected only every two years.) The raw number of freshmen leaving the state grew by 3 percent between 1992 and 2000, but the much larger growth of 29 percent among those remaining in state caused the shift from minority to majority status.



WHERE DO THEY GO? Connecticut's high-school graduates go everywhere, but concentrate on neighboring states and the rest of the Northeast.

In each of the last three years of available data (1996, 1998 and 2000), there was at least one recent high-school graduate from Connecticut enrolling as a first-time freshman in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. About 850 of the roughly 3,500 colleges in the U.S. had one such student.

*First-time CT freshmen who graduated from high school in previous 12 months.

Most of those leaving the state stayed close to home, with the majority concentrating in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island combined. These states plus the rest of New England, New Jersey and Pennsylvania enrolled 70 to 75 percent of the Connecticut students.

Table 2 lists the top 10 out-of-state choices of Connecticut freshmen over these three years. Northeastern University in Boston enrolled more Connecticut freshmen than did any other out-of-state school in each year. (In 2000, Northeastern even enrolled more Connecticut freshmen than did two-thirds of in-state schools!)

Northeastern Univ. (MA)	267	Univ. of Mass-Amherst	159
Boston Univ. (MA)	223	Marist College (NY)	156
Univ. of Rhode Island	203	Keene State College (NH)	148
Boston College (MA)	172	Providence College (RI)	137
Johnson & Wales Univ. (RI)	160	Univ. of Vermont	131

COLLEGE SECTOR: IN-STATE VS. OUT-OF-STATE. There were pronounced differences in the types of colleges selected by recent high-school graduates who stayed in Connecticut and those who left. In 2000, 52 percent of the freshmen remaining in-state chose a public four-year college and 27 percent enrolled in a public two-year college. Of those who left the state, 74 percent chose an independent four-year college and 24 percent chose a public four-year college.

IMPLICATIONS. This partial stemming of the “brain drain” certainly is good news, as is the fact that most émigrés do not stray far from Connecticut and thus may return to the state and contribute to the economy after completing their education. The near term future looks good, as well, since we know that 12,800 recent graduates remained in Connecticut last fall (vs. 11,874 in fall 2000). Thus, when data from other states becomes available later (usually a two-year lag), it will show that a majority stayed in-state.

Still, Connecticut has one of the lowest overall retention rates in the nation. In 2000, the nine “states” retaining the smallest share of their high school graduates were (in ascending order) the District of Columbia, Vermont, New Hampshire, Alaska, Connecticut, Maine, New Jersey, Maryland and Rhode Island. This may not be surprising since, with the exception of Alaska, these states are located near many prominent out-of-state colleges. In short, the retention issue is likely to be influenced by the variety and quality of out-of-state choices, coupled with the desire of 18-year-olds to experience life away from home.

Also, although Connecticut retained more than half its freshmen in 2000, it still is a “net exporter” of college freshmen. In 2000, the “outflow” of almost 11,000 recent Connecticut high school graduates enrolling as college freshmen in other states compared to the “inflow” of about 7,789 high school graduates from other states enrolling as freshmen in Connecticut yielded a net loss of 3,199. This net outflow compares to an average net outflow of 4,100 across 1994, 1996 and 1998, so that gap appears to be narrowing.

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.