PUBLIC INSIGHT®

SAMPLE UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE OF BUSINESS / ALUMNI OUTCOMES PROFILE

Where Our Business Alumni Landed

Education, career, and location outcomes for 2,756 business alumni of a private Midwestern university. Sample report, anonymized.

Prepared by Public Insight Data Corporation

TalentView talent market intelligence / September 2026

www.publicinsight.io

AT A GLANCE

A business school whose graduates lead

2,756
College of Business alumni identified among 29,119 university profiles

$134.3K
median estimated compensation, against $110.0K for the university's other colleges

34%
hold a director, vice president, executive, owner, or partner title (21% elsewhere at the university)

24%
live in the neighboring state, mostly its major metro, against 15% in the home region

29%
of business bachelor's graduates went on to a graduate degree, most often an MBA

4–6 yrs
for the business bachelor's degree to pay back its cost at average net price

This profile looks at a private Midwestern university through the lens of its College of Business. Of 29,119 people who list the university in their education history, 14,968 state a field of study, and 2,756 of those studied accounting, finance, marketing, management, international business, or another business discipline. They are the subject of this report; alumni of the university's other colleges appear throughout as the point of comparison.

Business alumni are among the university's highest earners. Their median estimated compensation of $134,296 trails only the law school and runs about $24,000 above the rest of the university. Accounting ($157,268) and finance ($148,344) lead. The gap is not there at the start. Business graduates begin level with their peers and pull away steadily, so that by mid-career the difference is $20,000 to $30,000 a year.

What sets them apart most is where they end up in organizations. A third hold a title at director level or above, against a fifth of other the university alumni, and among business graduates more than thirty years out, nearly one in four is a chief executive, owner, partner, or president. They reach those roles through a very wide range of employers: 2,347 business alumni with a known employer work for 1,965 different organizations, with no single company accounting for even one percent.

Geographically the college looks toward the major city an hour away, across the state line. More business alumni live in that neighboring state (24%) than in the home region (15%), and the MBA programs they choose trace the same map.

In this report

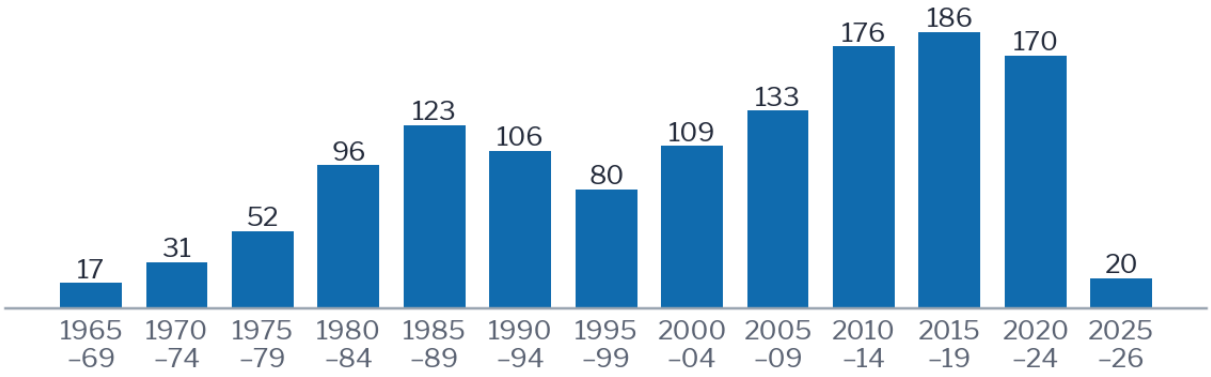
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THE POPULATION

Who the business alumni are

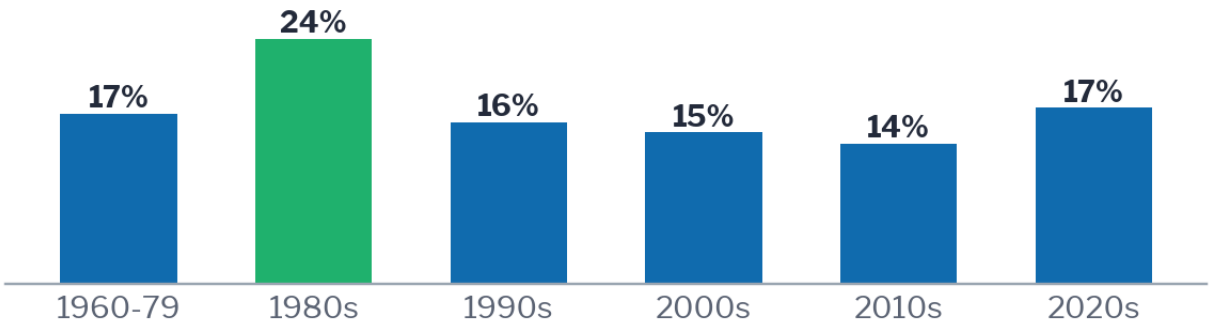
The group is 66% men and 34% women where gender is known, a more male mix than the university as a whole (47% women), and the median age is 44. 2,395 studied business as undergraduates and 234 hold the MBA or another graduate business credential.

College of Business alumni, by last year of business enrollment



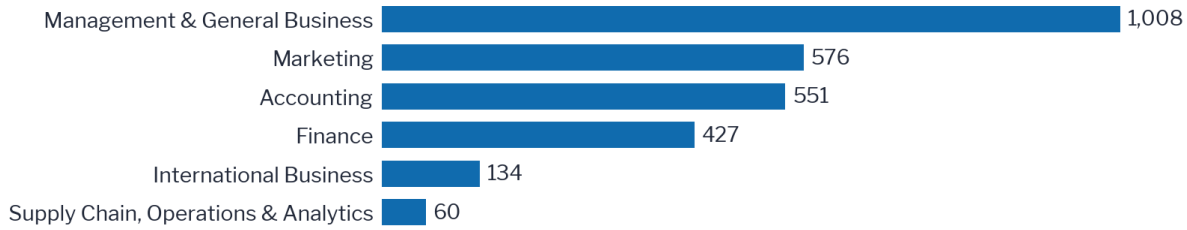
1,303 business alumni with a dated record.

Business as a share of alumni who state a field of study, by decade



Business was at its largest relative to the university in the 1980s, when nearly one in four alumni with a stated field studied in the college. It settled near one in seven from the 1990s on and has moved back up to 17% among the most recent classes.

What they studied



Primary business discipline, grouped from free-text fields of study. Accounting was a third of business alumni before 1990 and is about one in six today; finance has grown from a twentieth to nearly a fifth. Women are 45% of marketing alumni and 18% of finance alumni.

CONTEXT

How business compares within the university

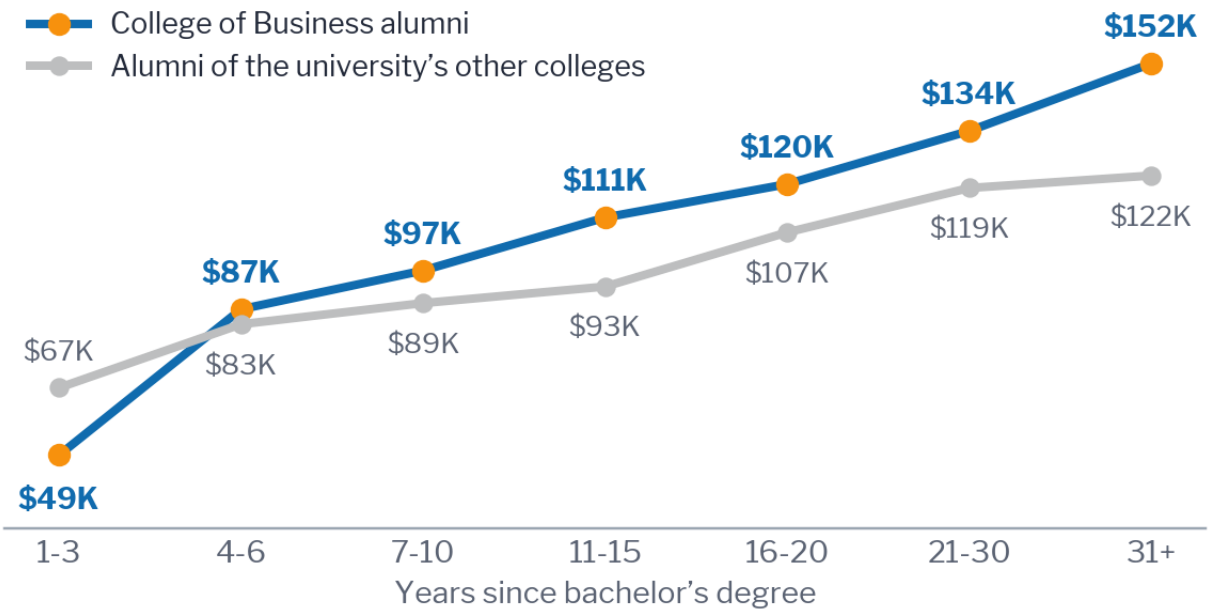
Median estimated compensation by college



Alumni with a stated field of study, grouped into colleges by keyword. n is the number with a compensation estimate.

Only law alumni earn more, and business sits ahead of engineering ($126,024), a notable result at a university known for its engineering college. Part of the explanation is timing, as the next chart shows.

Median estimated compensation by years since graduation



Bachelor's graduates with a dated degree. The first business point rests on 37 people and should be read loosely.

Business graduates do not start ahead. In the first several years they earn no more than other the university graduates, and the small group of the newest graduates sits below them. From year seven on they pull away, and the gap widens to roughly $18,000 at 11 to 15 years and about $30,000 past the thirty-year mark. That is the signature of careers that move into management.

Business alumni are, however, less likely to continue to graduate school: 29% of business bachelor's graduates hold an advanced degree, compared with 42% elsewhere in the university. Their advantage is built on the job.

CAREER OUTCOMES

What they earn

Across the 2,645 business alumni with a compensation estimate, the median is $134,296, and the middle half falls between $86,828 and $266,454. These are the data supplier's estimates for each person's current role, not reported wages, so medians are used throughout and the figures are best read as comparisons.

Median estimated compensation by business discipline



n is the number of people with a compensation estimate.

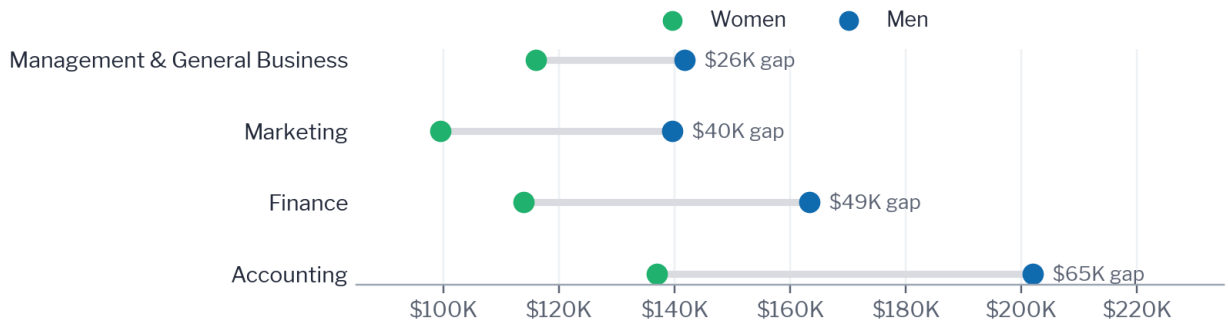
Accounting leads, which reflects both the profession's pay and the fact that accounting alumni skew older. Finance is close behind. Marketing, international business, and the small supply chain and analytics group sit near $115,000, still above the median for the rest of the university.

Median estimated compensation by highest degree held



A graduate degree pays for business alumni. Those who added a master's, usually an MBA, earn $149,463 at the median against $123,567 for those with the bachelor's alone, a difference of about $26,000.

The gap between men and women, by discipline



Median estimated compensation for women and men. Disciplines with at least 40 of each.

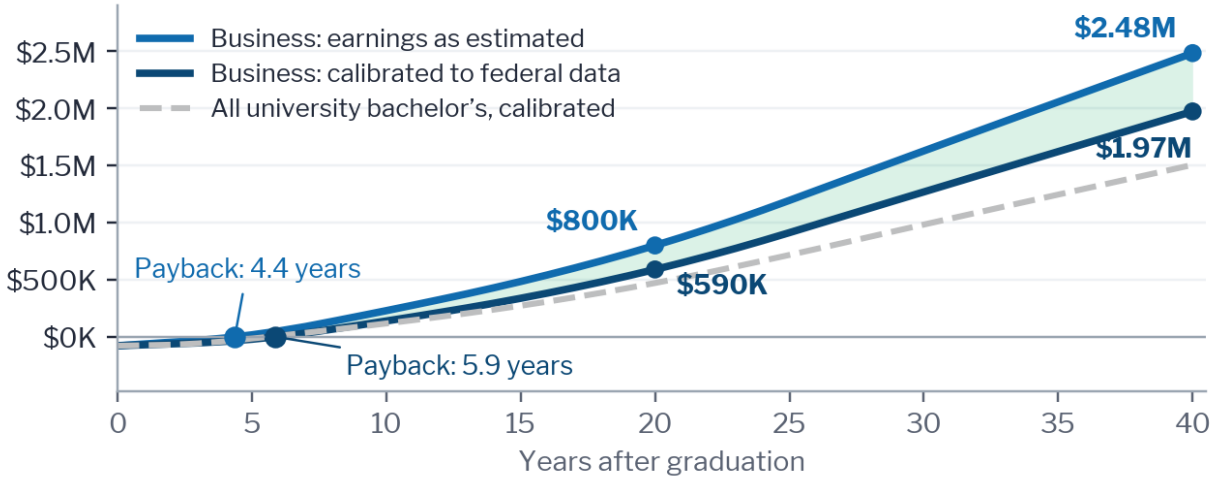
The overall medians are $149,415 for men and $115,527 for women, and a gap of $26,000 to $65,000 appears in every discipline. Age explains some of it, since the older cohorts are more heavily male, but not all. These comparisons are not adjusted for occupation, hours, or experience.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

What the business degree returns

The cost used is the university's average net price as reported to IPEDS, about $19,000 a year, multiplied by the university's average time to degree of 4.2 years, for a total of about $78,000. The return is what business bachelor's graduates earn at each career stage above the national median for full-time workers with only a high school diploma ($50,232). Only alumni whose highest credential is the the university business bachelor's degree are counted (754 people), so later MBAs do not lift the result.

Cumulative net gain over a high school diploma, after repaying the cost of the degree



On earnings as estimated, the degree pays for itself 4.4 years after graduation and produces a net gain of $800,000 over 20 years. University-wide, this dataset's early-career figure runs about 11% above the federal College Scorecard number for the university (about $69,000 four years out), so a second scenario scales the curve down by that amount: payback in 5.9 years and $590,000 over 20. On the same calibrated basis the average the university bachelor's degree returns $471,000, so the business degree is worth about $119,000 more over two decades.

Scenario	Cost	Payback	Net gain, 20 yrs	Net gain, 40 yrs	Annual return
Average net price, earnings as estimated	~$78,000	4.4 yrs	$800,000	$2,484,000	23%
Average net price, calibrated to Scorecard	~$78,000	5.9 yrs	$590,000	$1,974,000	19%
Full published cost, earnings as estimated	~$245,000	8.7 yrs	$633,000	$2,317,000	12%
Full published cost, calibrated	~$245,000	10.8 yrs	$422,000	$1,806,000	10%

Annual return is the 40-year internal rate of return.

By discipline, accounting and finance graduates show the largest 20-year gains, above $1.1 million on earnings as estimated, followed by management at about $820,000 and marketing at about $680,000.

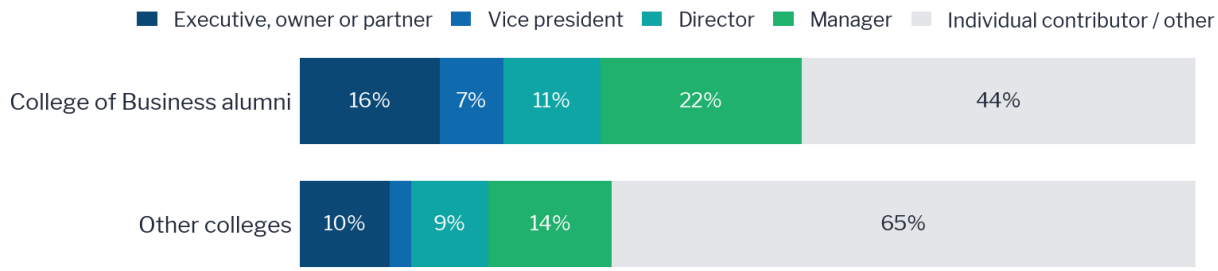
How to read this. These figures describe graduates; the six-year graduation rate is about 70%. Net price covers aided full-time undergraduates and includes living costs. Taxes and loan interest are excluded.

CAREERS

The path to leadership

The clearest difference between business alumni and the rest of the university is how far they rise.

Current level of responsibility, by job title

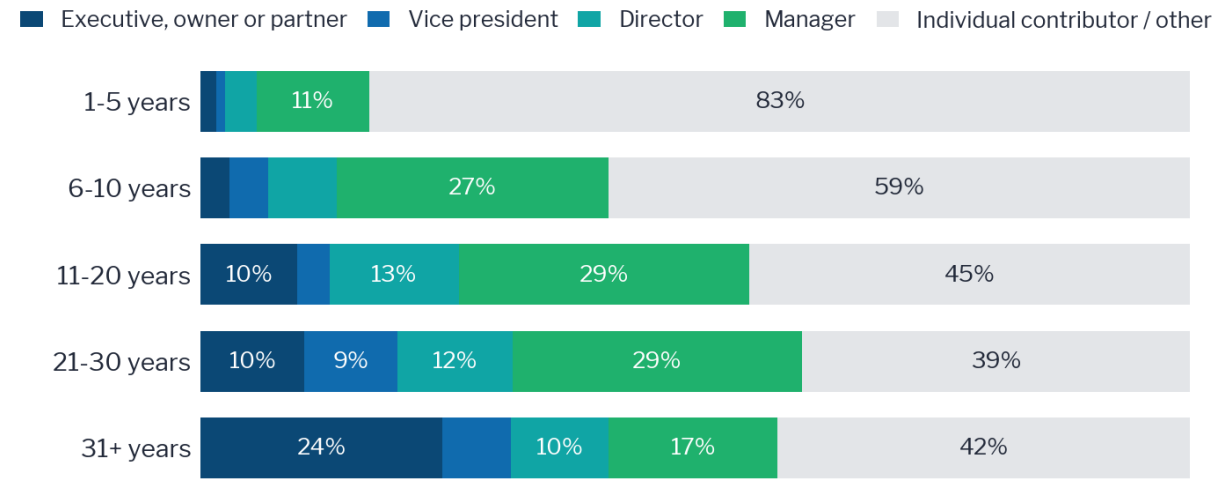


Based on keywords in current job titles. "Executive" includes chief officers, presidents, owners, founders, partners, principals, and managing directors.

16% of business alumni hold an executive, owner, or partner title, against 10% in the other colleges, and they are three times as likely to be a vice president (7% against 2%).

Lining business alumni up by years since they left the university shows how those careers unfold. This is a cross-section of different classes, not one class followed through time, but the staircase is clear.

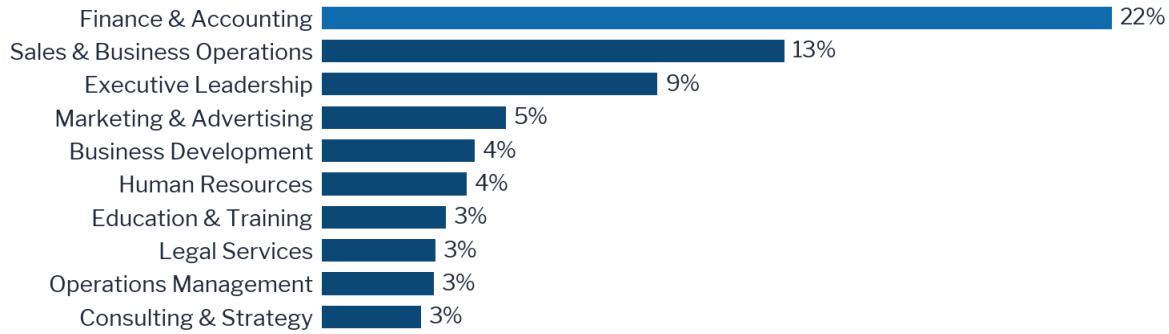
Level of responsibility by years since leaving the university



Business alumni with a current job title and a dated the university record.

Within five years, 11% are already managers. Between six and ten years that rises to 27%, and the first directors and vice presidents appear. From eleven years on, about a third hold a director-level title or above. Among those more than thirty years out, 24% are executives, owners, or partners.

Current job function, all business alumni



Share of the 2,210 business alumni whose current role could be classified. Top ten shown.

Finance and accounting is the largest function, followed by sales and by executive leadership itself. Disciplines map onto functions about as one would hope, as the table shows: 53% of accounting alumni work in finance and accounting, and marketing alumni divide between sales (22%) and marketing (17%).

Where each discipline works now

Discipline studied	Finance & accounting	Sales	Marketing	Executive leadership	Business dev.	HR
Accounting	53%	2%	0%	12%	3%	1%
Finance	34%	11%	3%	10%	4%	3%
Marketing	5%	22%	17%	7%	4%	3%
Management & General Business	10%	15%	3%	10%	5%	7%
International Business	13%	12%	0%	4%	7%	4%

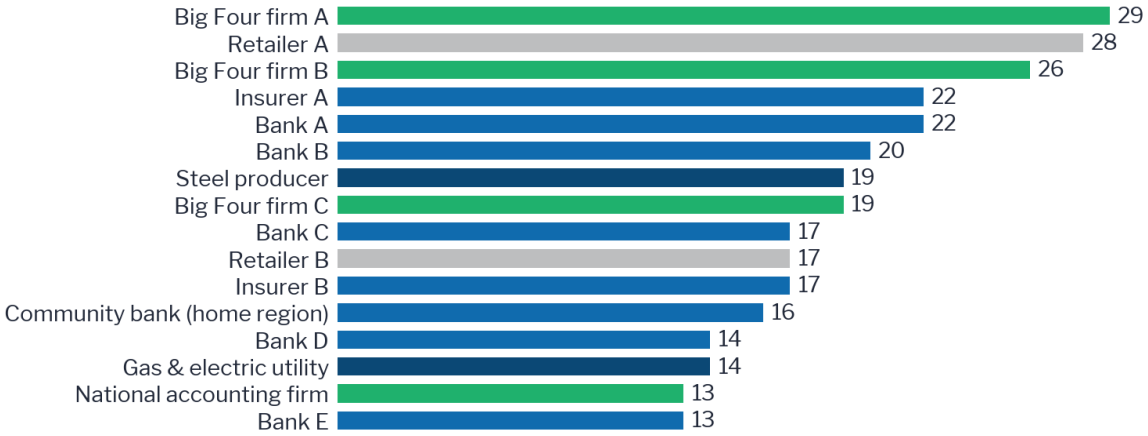
Share of each discipline's alumni in each current job function. Rows do not sum to 100% because smaller functions are omitted.

CAREER OUTCOMES

Where they work

No employer dominates. Setting aside the university itself, which employs 45 business alumni, the largest current employers each account for about a dozen people: a steel producer and a utility in the home region, a national accounting firm, a bank, and an insurer. A fuller picture comes from looking across entire work histories.

Employers where the most business alumni have worked at some point



Green: public accounting firms. Blue: banks, insurers, and wealth managers. Dark blue: home-region industrial and utility employers. Gray: other. Names replaced with generic labels.

Three clusters stand out. The first is public accounting: 112 business alumni have worked at a major accounting firm, 83 of them at a Big Four firm, with two of the Big Four well ahead of the other two, and a national mid-tier firm headquartered in the major city not far behind. The second is financial services, from national names to the home region's community banks. A faith-affiliated insurer's presence reflects the university's church ties. The third is the region's industrial base: its steel mills and its gas and electric utility.

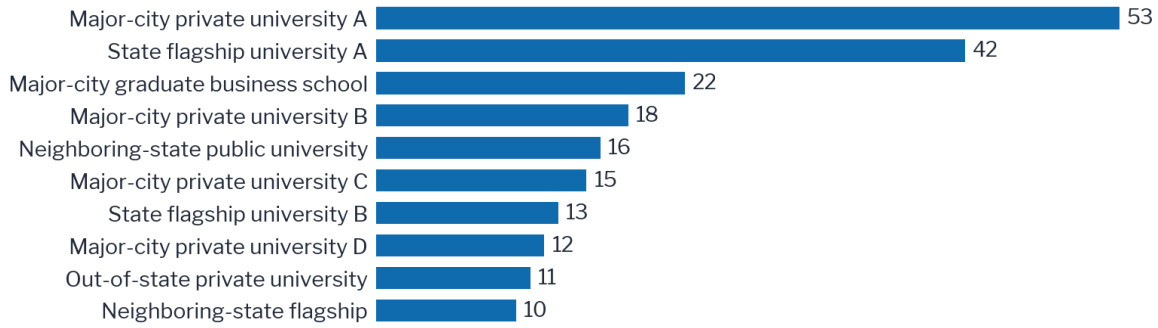
Public accounting is a smaller pipeline here than at some business schools: 17% of accounting alumni have worked at one of the large firms, while 53% work in a finance or accounting function today, which suggests most go directly into corporate accounting. Among business graduates since 2000, the most common first employers are two large retailers, two Big Four firms, and the national accounting firm, and the most common first functions are finance and accounting (24%), sales (17%), and marketing (10%).

GRADUATE EDUCATION

Graduate school and the MBA

Of 2,428 people with a business bachelor's degree from the university, 715 (29%) went on to a graduate or professional degree. About half of those (366) chose an MBA or another business master's, and 51 went to law school. Only 105 returned to the university for it.

Where business graduates earned graduate degrees



The list is a map of the major city's business schools and the region's large public universities. A major-city private university leads by a clear margin, followed by the state flagship, a graduate business school in the city, and two more city universities. Two of the country's most selective MBA programs, both in the city, together account for 27 graduates.

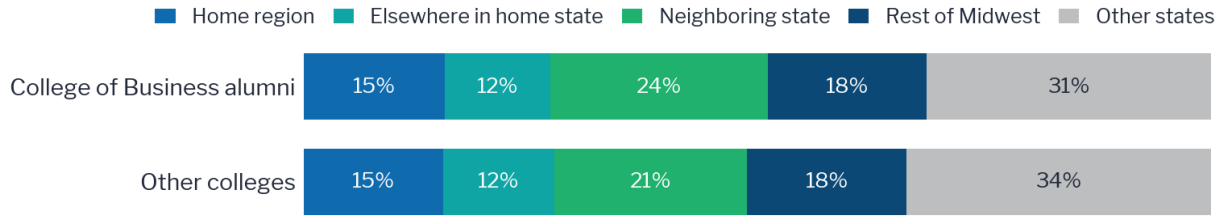
The university's own graduate business programs draw a different population. Of 234 people holding its MBA or other graduate business credential, only 61 were its undergraduates, and of those, a third came from engineering or arts and sciences. The largest outside feeders are the state's two flagship universities (25 and 10), consistent with a program serving working professionals in the home region. As noted earlier, a master's degree is associated with about $26,000 in additional annual compensation for business alumni.

LOCATION

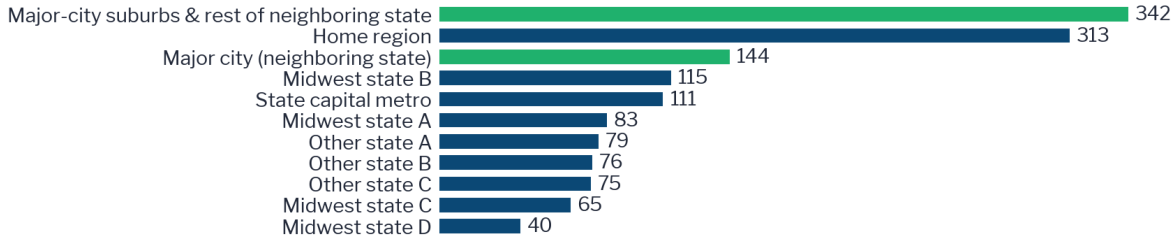
Where they live

Of the 2,022 business alumni with a known location, 15% live in the home region and 12% elsewhere in the state. 24% live in the neighboring state, 18% in the rest of the Midwest, and 31% farther afield.

Where business alumni live, compared with other colleges



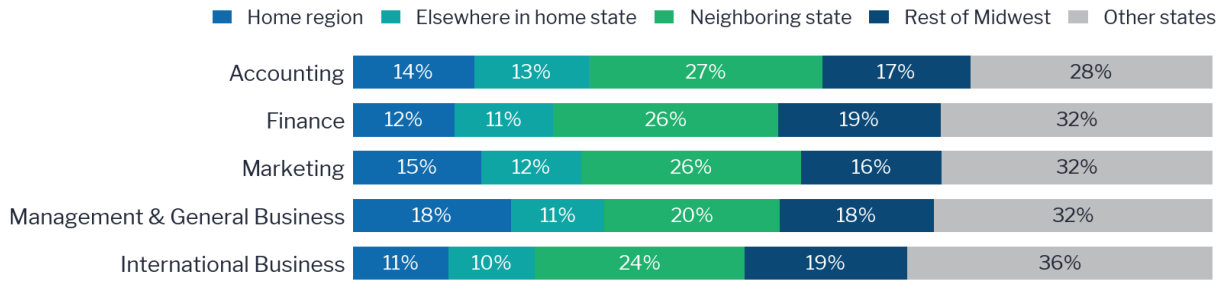
Largest hubs of business alumni



The neighboring state and its major city highlighted.

The major city alone has 144, close to the 165 in the university's home town, and its suburbs and the rest of that state add 342 more. Pay follows: the median is $99,481 in the home region, $135,856 in the neighboring state, and $154,221 in other states.

Where business alumni live, by discipline



Accounting alumni are the most rooted in the home region (14%). Finance alumni lean most toward the neighboring state (26%), with the major city's banks and trading firms an hour away.

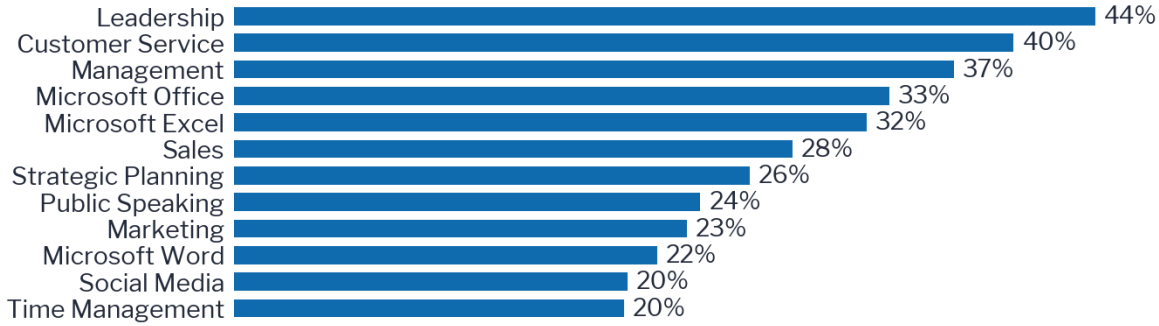
Recent classes are far more local than earlier ones. About one in ten business alumni from before 2010 lives in the home region, against 25% of those from the 2010s and 30% from the 2020s. Some of that is simply time, but it also suggests the college now draws more of its students from its own region.

SKILLS

What they can do

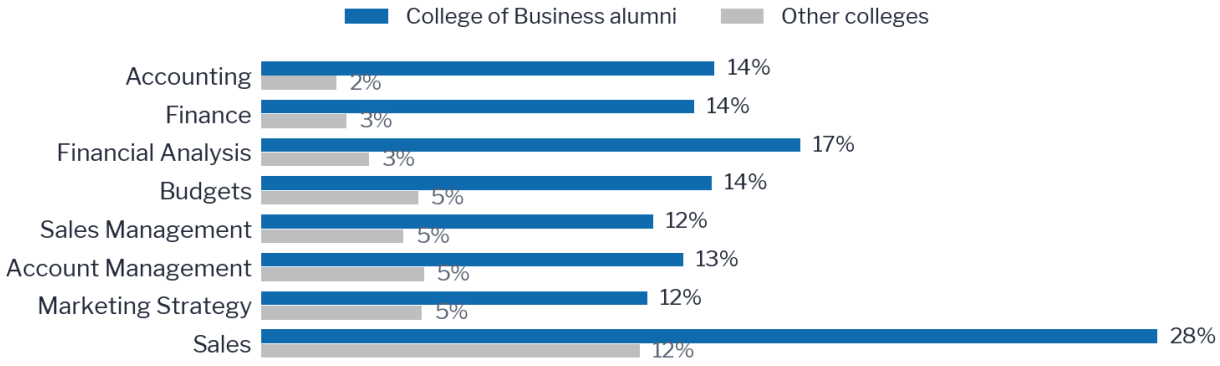
2,308 business alumni list skills on their profiles, a median of 18 each. Leadership comes first, listed by 44%, followed by customer service, management, and the Microsoft Office tools. Sales, strategic planning, and marketing all make the top ten.

Most common skills among business alumni



Share of business alumni with at least one listed skill who list each one.

Skills that most distinguish business alumni from the rest of the university



Skills listed by at least 10% of business alumni, ranked by how much more common they are than among alumni of other colleges.

The distinguishing skills are the working vocabulary of business: financial analysis, accounting, budgeting, sales and account management, and marketing strategy. Each discipline has its own signature.

Discipline	Signature skills (share of that discipline's alumni listing each)
Accounting	Financial Reporting 37%, Auditing 24%, Internal Controls 22%, Financial Accounting 19%, General Ledger 14%, CPA 13%
Finance	Financial Analysis 33%, Finance 29%, Data Analysis 13%, Investments 12%, Financial Modeling 12%
Marketing	Marketing Strategy 24%, Social Media Marketing 21%, Advertising 17%, Sales Operations 14%, Marketing Communications 13%, Digital Marketing 12%
Management & General Business	Team Building 24%, Event Planning 18%, Training 16%, New Business Development 15%, Sales Management 15%, Negotiation 12%

TAKEAWAYS

What this means for the College of Business

- **The leadership story is the headline.** A third of business alumni hold director-level titles or above and nearly a quarter of the most senior cohort are executives, owners, or partners. That is a stronger claim than starting salary, and one that few competitors can document.
- **The return builds over time, so tell it over time.** Business graduates start level with their university peers and finish about $30,000 a year ahead. Recruiting messages built on first-job pay undersell the degree; the ten- and twenty-year picture is where it wins.
- **The degree pays back in about four to six years** at average net price, and returns roughly $119,000 more over 20 years than the average bachelor's degree from the university on a like-for-like basis.
- **The major city across the state line is the college's market.** A quarter of business alumni live in that state, the MBA destinations are the city's schools, and pay there runs about $36,000 above the home region. Employer relations, alumni events, and internships belong there as much as on campus.
- **There is no anchor employer, which cuts both ways.** Alumni are spread across nearly two thousand organizations. That is resilient, but it means there is no single recruiting relationship doing the work. The accounting firms, the major city's banks, and the home region's industrials are the natural places to build deeper pipelines.
- **Public accounting is underdeveloped relative to the accounting program's outcomes.** Accounting is the best-paid discipline, yet only one in six accounting alumni has worked at a major firm. Stronger Big Four and mid-tier firm recruiting would be a visible win.
- **The pay gap between men and women is wide in every discipline** and finance is 82% male. Both bear on how the college recruits and supports women.
- **The MBA serves a different, regional audience.** Three in four of the university's graduate business students earned their bachelor's elsewhere, led by the state's two flagships. Most business undergraduates who want an MBA go to the major city for it.

About the data

Source and population. Records come from the TalentView talent market dataset maintained by Public Insight Data Corporation (www.publicinsight.io), built from publicly available professional profiles. The starting population is every profile listing the university in its education history: 29,119 people. **Anonymized sample:** institution, place, and employer names are replaced with generic labels; cost figures are rounded. About half state a usable field of study. College of Business alumni are those whose field of study at the university matches business disciplines by keyword (2,756 people); sport administration, health care administration, economics, actuarial science, international commerce and policy, and information technology are assigned to other colleges. The true number of business alumni in the data is higher, since those who state no field cannot be classified.

Compensation. Figures are the data supplier's estimates for each person's current role, not reported wages. Medians are used in place of averages. **Leadership levels** are inferred from keywords in current job titles and are approximate; titles such as "partner" and "principal" carry different weight in different industries.

Definitions. The home region is defined as the six counties around the university. The neighboring state is used as a proxy for its major metro. Net price, published cost, time to degree, graduation rate, and Scorecard earnings are from IPEDS and the College Scorecard. Percentages are calculated on the people for whom the item is known.

PUBLIC INSIGHT®

See where your graduates land.

This profile was built with TalentView, Public Insight's talent market intelligence platform. The same analysis can be produced for any college or university: where alumni studied next, where they work, what they earn, and where they live.

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