

# POST-GRADUATION ACTIVITIES

## CLASS OF 2006

A Student Life Assessment Update – Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Update No. 07-1

Spring 2007

### Highlights from The Career Center's Annual Survey

#### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to highlight information on the graduate and professional school enrollment and employment patterns of the class of 2006. This report serves as a summary of the post-college experiences of recent Luther graduates and to provide information to current students, prospective students, and alumni that may be useful in the career planning process. The outcomes in this report are a reflection of the outstanding academic programs, talented faculty, and the endless experiential learning opportunities that can be found at Luther College.

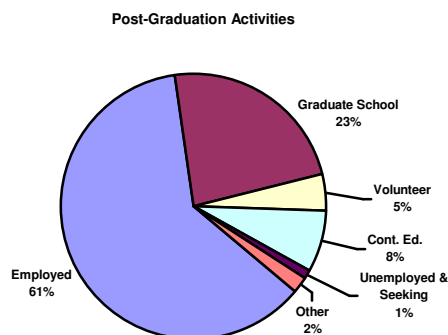
The data collection process for this report takes place from May to January. For those students who have solidified their plans prior to graduation, we received their information in May 2006. For students who were still unsure about their plans, the data were gathered through a 6-month-out survey in November 2006 and follow-up telephone calls to non-respondents in January 2007. The Career Center staff works tirelessly to gather the most comprehensive and accurate set of data on which to build this report. As a result of this work, we were able to achieve a total response rate of 91.7%.

This report summarizes some of the more interesting findings from the survey. The table on the last page provides summary information on the status of students, broken down and reported by their major(s).

#### Post-Graduation Activities

The first chart in the next column graphically represents the overall post-college activities of the 2006 graduates in six categories: graduate/professional school (23%), employed (61%), other (2%), volunteer (5%), continuing education (8%), and unemployed and seeking (1%). Two of the categories deserve some explanation. Students who selected the "other" category were not seeking employment, enrolling in graduate school, or volunteering. Some of these students are traveling, studying for exams (for example, the CPA exam), or engaged in another activity. Students within the "continuing education" category are enrolled in an undergraduate program to further their education (for example, to obtain a teaching license) or are participating in some other activity (for example, an internship) to gain the necessary credentials to enter the field of their choice. The "employed" category includes students that are employed either full-time (91.6%) or part-time (8.3%). Per the U.S. Department of Labor, full-time employment is defined by working a minimum of 35 hours per week.

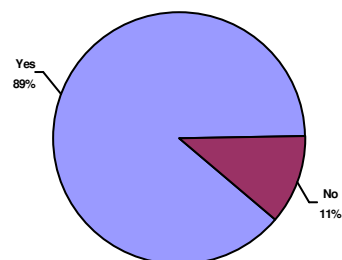
While the U.S. economy has been quite tenuous during the past five years, the class of 2006 experienced the best college graduate job market since September 11<sup>th</sup>. The overall class was very competitive in terms of obtaining employment, enrolling in selective graduate programs, and volunteering with prestigious organizations. With the natural attrition of the Baby Boomer population over the next 10 years, opportunities for our graduates will continue to grow.



#### Career Goals: Are graduates doing what they want to do?

While many colleges and universities attempt to gather post-graduation data from their recent graduates, very few ask questions pertaining to the relevancy of a graduate's work to their overall career goals. We do here at Luther. That is, we ask our graduates who reported working full-time if their work is related to their career goals. Or, put another way, are they doing what they want to do? The following chart indicates that 89% of the graduates who reported working full-time are in positions and doing work that is related to their career goals. If you assume that students enrolled in graduate school and those continuing their education are engaged in "career related" activities (and one would certainly hope so), this percentage jumps to over 91%.

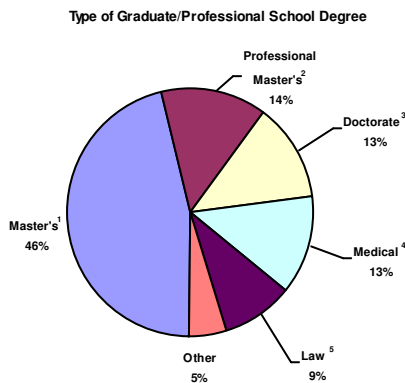
Is your current position related to your career goals?



We feel this information is particularly important because Luther students are not just provided with job coaching and advising (that is, "here's how to get a job"). We challenge and support students to think about their interests, gifts, talents, and values as they make decisions about their work life after Luther. In the words of Confucius, "Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life."

**Graduates Pursuing Further Education**

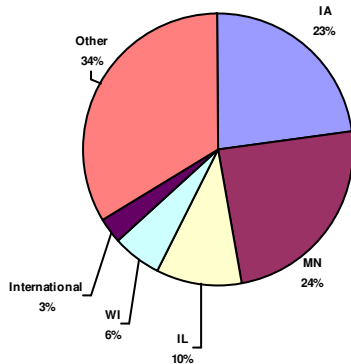
Of those students who selected to attend graduate or professional school after Luther, the largest percentage (46%) reported that they were pursuing work toward a master's degree. The 2006 graduates indicated pursuing a wide variety of other advanced degrees including medical (13%), professional master's (14%), doctorate (13%), and law (9%). The following chart provides a breakdown of the types of degrees pursued by the 2006 graduates, including specific notations listing the various degrees within each of these areas.



<sup>1</sup> MA, MS  
<sup>2</sup> MBA, MSW, M.Div., M.Music  
<sup>3</sup> Ph.D., Ed.D.  
<sup>4</sup> MD, DO, DDS, DVM  
<sup>5</sup> JD

Twenty-three percent of the students pursuing graduate or professional school studies did so at an institution in Iowa. Not surprisingly, the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois were selected as locations for graduate study by a significant number of the 2006 graduates (39.8%). Twenty-eight percent of the surveyed students selected to continue their graduate studies in one of 16 other states beyond the four-state region. Additionally, 2.8% of the graduates decided to study internationally.

Geographic Location of Graduate/Professional School



Approximately 33% of the respondents are attending graduate school at one of the institutions below. Beyond this, a few select members of the class of 2006 are currently studying at some of the finest research universities in the U.S. including Columbia, Tulane, Duke, Vanderbilt, and Johns Hopkins.

**Top 5 Graduate School Destinations**

University of Iowa	16 students
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	10 students
Iowa State University	3 students
Purdue University	3 students
University of Chicago	2 students
University of Wisconsin-Madison	2 students

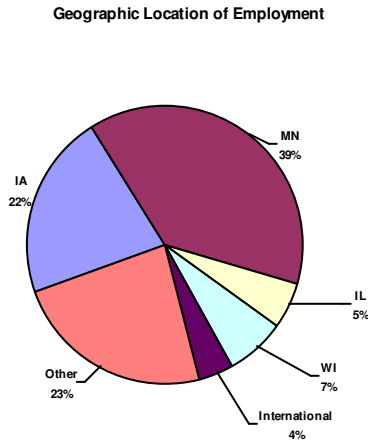
**Employment Activities**

The range of career paths selected by Luther graduates is quite remarkable. The largest single career path for the class of 2006 was "Teaching K-12" with more than 24% of our students pursuing that path. Business/finance/banking (11.15%), nursing (8.2%), marketing/sales/retail (6.56%), volunteer (6.23%), and social services (5.57%) round out the list of the top career paths. The following table summarizes the careers pursued by the 2006 graduates.

**Summary of 2006 Graduates Career Paths**

Teaching K-12	24.26%
Business/Finance/Banking	11.15%
Nursing	8.20%
Marketing/Sales/Retail	6.56%
Volunteer	6.23%
Social Services	5.57%
Information Technology	4.26%
Research/Development	3.28%
Accounting	2.95%
Medicine/Health	2.95%
Hotel/Restaurant/Catering	2.62%
Educ./Teaching Post-Secondary	1.64%
Consulting	1.31%
Sports/Recreation	1.31%
Performing Arts	1.31%
Church-related (non-clergy)	0.98%
Library/Museum	0.98%
Other/Various	14.43%

For those students who decided to pursue employment (as opposed to graduate/professional school) the location of employment is interesting. Minnesota led the four-state area with 38.6% of the class of 2006 selecting it as their place for employment. The remaining three states in the four-state area (Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois) were selected for employment by an additional 33.7% of respondents. Twenty-three percent (up 5% from last year) of students found employment outside of the four-state area, while an additional 4.2% pursued employment overseas.



As would be expected, students pursued their work across a wide variety of impressive regional, national, and international organizations. The following table highlights the names of a few of the employing organizations, arranged by broad industry groupings, which attracted Luther students. The list is not exhaustive, but does provide an overview as to the range and diversity of the hiring organizations.

Selected Employers of 2006 Graduates	
<b>Business:</b>	
Target -----	6 students
Allied Insurance -----	2 students
Hormel Foods -----	2 students
Thrivent Financial -----	2 students
Deloitte & Touche -----	1 student
<b>Health/Sciences:</b>	
Mayo Clinic -----	7 students
United Hospital -----	3 students
Univ. of Iowa Hospitals -----	2 students
Lifetime Fitness -----	2 students
<b>Social Sciences/Education/Communication:</b>	
Opportunity Homes -----	2 students
Caledonia Public Schools -----	2 students
Holden Village -----	2 students
Singapore American School -----	2 students
<b>Consulting/Technology:</b>	
Epic Systems -----	7 students
Fastenal Company -----	1 student
IBM -----	1 student

**Volunteer Service**

As mentioned earlier, 4.5% of the recent graduates pursued volunteer service as their career path after leaving Luther. The following table lists the top five of those national volunteer organizations who enrolled at least one 2006 Luther graduate.

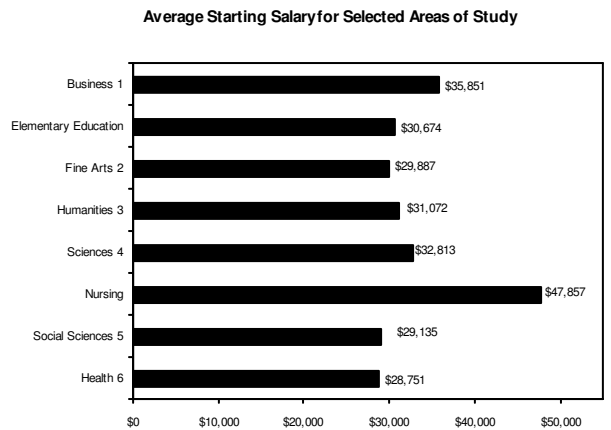
Volunteer Organizations	
Lutheran Volunteer Corps -----	8 students

ELCA Global Missions -----	3 students
AmeriCorps -----	1 student
Urban Servant Corps -----	1 student
World Teach -----	1 student

**Salary Information**

Students were asked to indicate their annual starting salary in increments of \$2,500. The range began at less than \$10,000 to over \$50,000. From these data, average salaries grouped by Luther majors were calculated. These averages by major were used to calculate an overall salary average. Please note that far fewer students reported on salary data than other aspects of the survey; approximately 57.4% of the employed students provided salary information. This was expected given the sensitive nature of inquiries about compensation.

The following two tables highlight the average starting salaries by area of study and selected occupations, respectively. We present salary data in these two ways to help readers understand that our graduates pursue career paths both related and unrelated to their major. For example, we have English majors who seek opportunities as writers and editors, as well as positions in business and banking. Salaries in the survey varied greatly by major, geographic location, and industry or occupation. Students studying nursing (as a field of study) commanded the highest starting salaries (\$47,857). The lowest salaries were in health (\$28,751) and the social sciences (\$29,135). Again, however, because of the low response rate on salary data, caution should be exercised in making assumptions or drawing conclusions about salary from this data.

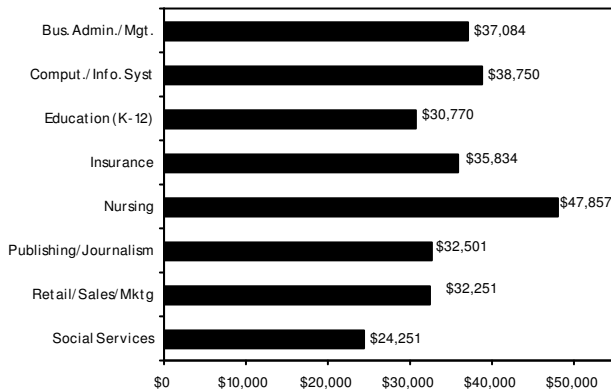


- 1 Accounting, Management, Economics, MIS
- 2 Art, Theatre, Dance, Music
- 3 English, Languages, Religion, Philosophy, Communication
- 4 Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics
- 5 History, Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work
- 6 Athletic Training, Health, Physical Education

The average starting salaries, broken down by selected occupations, also varied considerably. The highest salaries were again in nursing (\$47,857), followed by the

computer/information systems (\$38,750), business administration (\$37,084), and insurance (\$35,834) fields. The lowest salaries were in social services (\$24,251) and Education Administration (\$27,084).

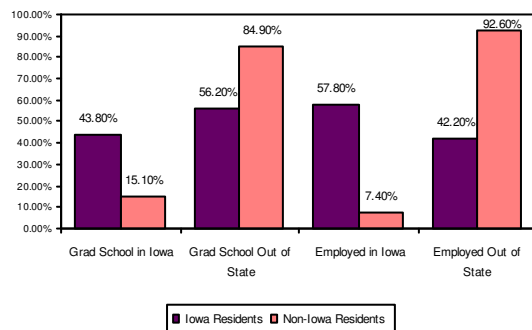
Average Starting Salaries for Selected Occupations



**Migration of Iowa/Non-Iowa Residents**

For several years now, Iowa legislators have focused on the migration of college-educated individuals (both for employment and advanced study) into and out of Iowa (affectionately known as “brain drain”). The chart below, separated by “Iowa residents” and “non-Iowa residents”, illustrates the percentages of students who are either employed full-time or enrolled in graduate study in Iowa or out-of-state. For example, of the Iowa residents who are working full-time, 57.8% are working in the state of Iowa while approximately 42.2% accepted employment in another state. Furthermore, of the Iowa residents enrolled in graduate school, 43.8% are attending an institution in Iowa while 56.2% enrolled in an institution in another state. A relatively small percentage of non-Iowa residents accepted employment in Iowa or enrolled in an Iowa institution for graduate study (7.4% and 15.1% respectively).

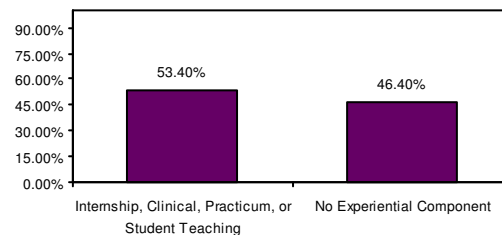
Migration patterns of Iowa and non-Iowa residents for graduate study and full-time employment.



**Student Internships**

Just more than half of Luther students engage in internships, student teaching, or other clinical/practicum experiences while at Luther (53.4%). In general, these experiences occur

Student participation in internships, clinicals, practicums, or student teaching experiences.



**Post-Graduation Status According to Major**

The table on the last page provides a summary of much of the data on which this report is based. The table is organized according to majors. *Students who majored in more than one area are represented in the table in each of the majors they obtained.* Therefore, the distribution of majors listed in the table does not correspond to the number of 2006 graduates.

**A Final Word About Careers**

In today’s society, we are surrounded by numbers and statistics. We use this information to make and/or justify decisions. Therefore, it is very easy and tempting to examine and use ‘numbers’ as one of the sole pieces of information in the career decision-making process. If only it was that simple! The selection of a career, like the selection of a major, is a difficult process. Many factors need to be considered in the selection process, some of which end up being very difficult to quantify. Ultimately, the selection of one’s life work is really about the identification of one’s self, values, interests, gifts, and passions. The discovery of one’s sense of vocation is a process that data cannot capture. Rather, it’s a process that will evolve in our graduates’ lives over time. It also involves the feeling of being called to work and serving in sometimes unpredictable ways. Charts, graphs, and numbers simply cannot capture this.

—MRP

POST-GRADUATION STATUS ACCORDING TO MAJOR

Major	Distribution of Majors	# Responding	% Responding	% Seeking Advanced Degrees	% Employed	% Continuing Education	% Other	% Volunteer	% Unemployed & Seeking
Accounting	18	13	72%	31%	69%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Africana Studies	3	3	100%	0%	67%	0%	0%	33%	0%
Anthropology	10	9	90%	33%	44%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Art	18	15	83%	7%	53%	33%	0%	7%	0%
Athletic Training	4	4	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Biblical Languages	1	1	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Biology	63	59	94%	44%	39%	8%	3%	5%	0%
Chemistry	10	8	80%	25%	38%	13%	0%	25%	0%
Classics/Greek/Latin	2	2	100%	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Communication Studies	21	21	100%	10%	67%	5%	0%	14%	0%
Computer Science	13	10	77%	30%	60%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Economics	5	4	80%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Elementary Education	47	47	100%	6%	91%	2%	0%	0%	0%
English	32	30	94%	17%	57%	7%	3%	13%	3%
French	5	5	100%	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%	0%
German	4	4	100%	0%	50%	25%	0%	25%	0%
Health/Health Education	12	12	100%	17%	67%	17%	0%	0%	0%
History	20	18	90%	17%	72%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Interdisc./Indiv.	5	5	100%	40%	40%	0%	20%	0%	0%
Management	47	39	83%	10%	87%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Management Info. Systems	6	4	67%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mathematics/Math Statistics	29	28	97%	39%	43%	11%	7%	0%	0%
Music	44	44	100%	34%	39%	20%	2%	2%	2%
Nursing	29	27	93%	0%	85%	7%	4%	0%	4%
Philosophy	6	6	100%	33%	50%	17%	0%	0%	0%
Physical Ed.	11	11	100%	9%	82%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Physics	11	11	100%	64%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Political Science	31	26	84%	46%	46%	4%	0%	4%	0%
Psychology	29	28	97%	36%	54%	0%	0%	11%	0%
Religion	12	12	100%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Scandinavian Studies	<i>There were no graduates in the class of 2006 with this particular major.</i>								
Social Work	12	12	100%	33%	50%	0%	0%	17%	0%
Sociology	17	12	71%	33%	42%	8%	0%	8%	8%
Spanish	33	32	97%	13%	66%	6%	3%	13%	0%
Theatre/Dance	5	5	100%	20%	60%	0%	0%	20%	0%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>

Note: Because of rounding, the sums of percent distributions may not always equal 100.