



NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS ELITE NATIONAL POLL
3rd INSTALLMENT OF THE INNOVATION IMPERATIVE POLLING SERIES
TOPLINE REPORT

National Business Leaders N = 502
Oversample in Boston, Charlotte, and Seattle N = 301
Telephone Survey Conducted February 3 – 19, 2014

1. By way of background, does your company hire...

A. Recent graduates directly out of college

Table with 6 columns: Recent Graduates, Total, National, Boston, Charlotte, Seattle. Rows: Yes, No, Don't know / refused.

B. Young professionals that graduated college within the past 1-5 years

Table with 6 columns: Young Professionals, Total, National, Boston, Charlotte, Seattle. Rows: Yes, No, Don't know / refused.

CURRENT STATE

2. How would you rate the job the U.S. higher education system is currently doing in terms of preparing recent college graduates for the workforce?

Table with 6 columns: Preparing Recent Graduates for the Workforce, Total, National, Boston, Charlotte, Seattle. Rows: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Don't know / refused.

Table with 3 columns: Preparing Recent Graduates for the Workforce (Tracking data), 2012 National Survey, 2013 National Survey. Rows: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor.



* Language from 2012 survey – "Overall, how would you rate the current state of higher education in America?"

3. Please indicate which, if any, of the following describes the impact of the Great Recession on your company?

Impact of the Great Recession	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
We reduced the number of entry level positions	40%	40%	35%	43%	39%
We stopped or reduced recruiting at colleges and universities	20%	17%	30%	23%	24%
We slowed promotion tracks for existing employees	31%	31%	32%	31%	32%
We invested less money and resources in employee training programs	30%	29%	33%	24%	38%
None of the above	37%	36%	39%	42%	36%
Don't Know / Refused	1%	--	2%	--	1%

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

4. Thinking about the professional development of recent college graduates, which of the following would you say is the most important aspect of the first five years of an individual's career?

Most Important Aspect of First Five Years	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Learning to apply skills and knowledge gained in college	29%	32%	21%	27%	27%
Learning new skills and industry-relevant competencies	44%	42%	44%	44%	51%
Building professional networks and personal ties	15%	14%	21%	14%	10%
Trying out different types of jobs or roles within a company	11%	10%	14%	12%	7%
Don't Know / Refused	2%	1%	1%	4%	5%

EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES

Thinking ahead to the next 10-15 years....

5. Do you expect that the value of a college degree in America will increase, decrease or stay the same?

Future Value of College Degree	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Increase	34%	33%	38%	35%	29%
Decrease	28%	28%	23%	26%	33%
Stay the same	38%	38%	37%	39%	37%
Don't Know / Refused	1%	1%	2%	--	1%



6. And, in the next 10-15years, do you think college graduates in this country will be more prepared, less prepared, or equally prepared to enter the workforce as compared to today's graduates?

Future Preparedness of College Graduates	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
More prepared	26%	27%	24%	27%	28%
Less prepared	31%	32%	34%	34%	23%
Equally prepared	40%	39%	39%	39%	46%
Don't Know / Refused	2%	2%	4%	--	3%

COMPETENCIES: SKILLS, CHARACTERISTICS AND THE SKILLS GAP

7. What would you say is the single most important skill or capability for a recent college graduate to possess?

Top 10 Skills	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Communication / Communication skills	13%	12%	9%	20%	14%
Inter-personal skills / networking / socialization / ability to work in teams	11%	11%	13%	7%	12%
Adaptability / flexibility	9%	8%	8%	15%	12%
Strong work ethic	7%	7%	9%	8%	8%
Ability to learn / listen / being trainable	6%	6%	8%	4%	8%
Willingness to work / learn	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%
Experience (i.e. trainings, internships)	5%	5%	6%	2%	9%
Critical thinking	5%	5%	8%	3%	4%
Technology / Computer skills / knowledge	5%	5%	3%	6%	3%
Drive / desire	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%

7B. And, would you say that most, some, or very few recent college graduates today have that skill or capability?

College Graduates with Skills	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Most	14%	13%	13%	17%	16%
Some	55%	59%	48%	48%	50%
Very few	30%	28%	38%	31%	31%
Don't Know / Refused	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%



8. Do you think there is currently a skills gap, or a shortage of necessary skills, among the U.S. workforce?

Skills Gap Among the U.S. Workforce	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Yes	72%	73%	64%	71%	76%
No	25%	25%	30%	26%	17%
Don't Know / Refused	3%	2%	6%	3%	6%

9. More than half of America's recent college graduates are either unemployed or working in a job that does not require a bachelor's degree. Do you think this is primarily because there are not enough jobs available or because recent graduates do not have the necessary skills to fill these jobs?

Reason for Unemployment/Underemployment	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Not enough jobs	45%	39%	52%	63%	46%
Lack of necessary skills	23%	24%	25%	17%	21%
Neither	7%	6%	11%	3%	13%
Both	24%	30%	11%	14%	19%
Don't Know / Refused	1%	1%	1%	3%	--

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

10. Which of the following was the most important factor for your own career success? Please select the top two in order of importance.

Personal Career Success Factors (Total top two choices)	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
College or graduate education	25%	27%	20%	21%	28%
Internships or summer jobs during college	18%	21%	16%	18%	10%
Mentors or advisors	32%	27%	45%	29%	43%
Personal or professional networks	22%	22%	21%	18%	30%
Early career training	28%	31%	22%	26%	21%
Personal drive and ambition	71%	72%	70%	79%	64%
Don't know / refused	3%	2%	6%	7%	3%



TECHNOLOGY AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

11. Please indicate which, if any, of the following are currently offered at your company:

Company Offerings	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Funding for employees to take online continuing education courses	37%	33%	44%	33%	48%
Funding for employees to take in-person continuing education courses	41%	38%	43%	44%	50%
Professional development training	53%	51%	62%	44%	65%
A rotational program for new hires to learn about different aspects of the company	37%	37%	37%	41%	39%
An international program for employees to work or train abroad	6%	6%	7%	4%	8%
None of the above	21%	22%	18%	29%	12%
Don't Know / Refused	--	--	1%	--	--

WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS

12. Is your company investing more, less or about the same amount in applied training for employees as compared to 5yrs ago?

Current Investments in Applied Training	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
More	29%	26%	34%	27%	42%
Less	17%	17%	13%	17%	19%
About the Same	50%	54%	45%	54%	35%
Don't Know / Refused	4%	4%	8%	2%	4%

13. Five years from now, do you expect that your company will be investing more, less, or about the same amount in applied training for employees?

Future Investments in Applied Training	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
More	39%	39%	36%	38%	45%
Less	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%
About the Same	53%	54%	53%	55%	46%
Don't Know / Refused	3%	1%	6%	3%	5%



RECRUITMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

14. Many colleges and universities partner with private industry. Which of the following would you say is the most beneficial type of partnership for your organization:

Beneficial Partnerships	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Research partnerships	8%	10%	5%	3%	4%
Long-term internships for college students (6-12 months)	36%	36%	40%	32%	36%
Education partnerships focused on specialized skills training	38%	36%	37%	45%	39%
None of the above	18%	18%	17%	19%	20%
Don't Know / Refused	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

14B. And, is this type of program currently underway at your company?

Partnerships Underway	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Yes	43%	44%	44%	44%	38%
No	55%	54%	56%	56%	60%
Don't Know / Refused	2%	2%	--	--	2%

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS: U.S. STANDING

15. Thinking about emerging economies, such as China, India and Brazil, and mature economies such as Japan and many nations in the European Union, how do you think the U.S. ranks in terms of preparing students for the workforce?

U.S. Compared to Mature and Emerging Economies	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Ahead of all	5%	7%	1%	4%	--
Ahead of most	36%	36%	43%	33%	29%
TOTAL AHEAD	41%	43%	44%	37%	29%
Behind most	49%	49%	38%	52%	54%
Behind all	5%	5%	9%	7%	4%
TOTAL BEHIND	54%	54%	47%	59%	58%
Don't know / refused	5%	4%	10%	3%	13%



U.S. Compared to Mature and Emerging Economies <i>(Tracking Data)</i>	2013 Hiring Managers	2013 National Survey	2014 Business Leaders
Ahead of all	4%	5%	7%
Ahead of most	29%	41%	36%
TOTAL AHEAD	33%	46%	43%
Behind most	62%	47%	49%
Behind all	5%	7%	5%
TOTAL BEHIND	67%	54%	54%
Don't know / refused	--	--	4%

Some colleges and universities are developing new ways to educate students and prepare them for the workforce. Please indicate how important you think each of the following is for U.S. colleges and universities to focus on:

- 16. Programs that teach students about entrepreneurship, including how to start their own businesses

Programs That Teach Entrepreneurship	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Very important	44%	45%	45%	41%	38%
Somewhat important	43%	44%	32%	43%	49%
TOTAL IMPORTANT	87%	89%	77%	84%	87%
Not very important	9%	9%	12%	10%	8%
Not at all important	3%	1%	10%	5%	5%
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	12%	10%	22%	15%	13%
Don't know / refused	1%	1%	1%	--	1%

Programs That Teach Entrepreneurship <i>(Tracking Data)</i>	2012 18-30 OS	2012 National Survey
Extremely important	31%	27%
Very important	36%	41%
EXTREMELY / VERY IMPORTANT	67%	69%
Somewhat important	24%	24%
Not very important	6%	6%
Not at all important	2%	1%
NOT VERY / NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	8%	7%
Don't know / refused	*	1%

* Language From 2012 surveys – “Teaching students about entrepreneurship, including how to start their own businesses” - Answer choices slightly modified



17. Integrating education programs with practical experience, such as internships with employers

<u>Integrating Education with Practical Experience</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Very important	75%	76%	72%	74%	73%
Somewhat important	21%	21%	23%	22%	21%
TOTAL IMPORTANT	96%	97%	95%	96%	94%
Not very important	1%	2%	1%	1%	--
Not at all important	2%	1%	3%	3%	5%
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%
Don't know / refused	1%	1%	1%	--	1%

<u>Integrating Education with Practical Experience</u> <i>(Tracking Data)</i>	2012 18-30 OS	2012 National Survey	2013 National Survey
Extremely important	42%	33%	29%
Very important	39%	44%	50%
EXTREMELY / VERY IMPORTANT	81%	77%	79%
Somewhat important	16%	19%	19%
Not very important	2%	2%	2%
Not at all important	--	1%	1%
NOT VERY / NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	2%	3%	3%
Don't know / refused	--	1%	1%

* 2012 surveys – Answer choices slightly modified

18. And, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following: The US higher education system needs to innovate to remain competitive with other countries around the world.

<u>Education Needs to Innovate to be Competitive</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Strongly agree	59%	61%	59%	52%	61%
Agree	35%	35%	38%	39%	32%
TOTAL AGREE	94%	96%	97%	91%	93%
Disagree	3%	2%	2%	7%	2%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
TOTAL DISAGREE	4%	3%	4%	8%	3%
Don't know / refused	1%	1%	--	1%	4%



Education Needs to Innovate to be Competitive <i>(Tracking Data)</i>	2012 18-30 OS	2012 National Survey	2013 Hiring Manager	2013 National Survey
Strongly agree	43%	34%	37%	35%
Agree	47%	49%	46%	52%
TOTAL AGREE	90%	83%	83%	87%
Neutral	1%	4%	N.A.	N.A.
Disagree	9%	10%	2%	11%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	0%	2%
TOTAL DISAGREE	9%	11%	2%	13%
Don't know / refused	--	2%	2%	--

* Language From 2012 surveys – “The U.S. higher education system needs to change to remain competitive with other countries around the world” - Answer choices slightly modified

Some programs offer online degrees by taking college-level courses on the internet, rather than in-person classes in a traditional classroom setting. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

19. An online college degree provides a similar quality of education as compared to traditional colleges or universities.

Online College is Similar Quality to Traditional College	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Strongly agree	11%	12%	9%	6%	14%
Agree	38%	36%	36%	41%	44%
TOTAL AGREE	49%	48%	45%	47%	58%
Disagree	33%	34%	35%	32%	27%
Strongly disagree	15%	14%	15%	19%	11%
TOTAL DISAGREE	48%	48%	50%	51%	38%
Don't know / refused	4%	4%	5%	2%	4%

Online College is Similar Quality to Traditional College <i>(Tracking Data)</i>	2012 18-30 OS	2012 National Survey	2013 Hiring Manager	2013 National Survey
Strongly agree	22%	11%	11%	10%
Agree	39%	37%	29%	31%
TOTAL AGREE	61%	49%	40%	41%
Neutral	3%	6%	28%	17%
Disagree	27%	30%	25%	31%
Strongly disagree	9%	12%	7%	11%
TOTAL DISAGREE	36%	42%	32%	42%
Don't know / refused	--	3%	--	--

* 2012 surveys – Answer choices slightly modified



20. An online college degree will be just as recognized and accepted among employers as a traditional college degree in the near future (next 5-7yrs).

Online College Will Be Accepted By Employers	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Strongly agree	16%	17%	10%	10%	21%
Agree	38%	35%	43%	45%	40%
TOTAL AGREE	54%	52%	53%	55%	61%
Disagree	32%	34%	33%	28%	29%
Strongly disagree	10%	10%	12%	15%	6%
TOTAL DISAGREE	42%	44%	45%	43%	35%
Don't know / refused	4%	4%	2%	2%	4%

Online College is Similar Quality to Traditional College <i>(Tracking Data)</i>	2012 18-30 OS	2012 National Survey	2013 Hiring Manager	2013 National Survey
Strongly agree	24%	13%	14%	13%
Agree	43%	40%	35%	39%
TOTAL AGREE	67%	53%	49%	52%
Neutral	2%	6%	31%	15%
Disagree	24%	28%	16%	25%
Strongly disagree	6%	10%	4%	7%
TOTAL DISAGREE	31%	39%	20%	32%
Don't know / refused	*	3%	--	--

* 2012 surveys – Answer choices slightly modified

21. My company would consider hiring an employee that received an online degree or certification from a non-university course provider.

Company Would Hire an Employee With an Online Degree	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Strongly agree	16%	16%	15%	18%	21%
Agree	52%	53%	53%	47%	53%
TOTAL AGREE	68%	69%	68%	65%	74%
Disagree	18%	18%	20%	22%	14%
Strongly disagree	5%	4%	5%	7%	8%
TOTAL DISAGREE	23%	22%	25%	29%	22%
Don't know / refused	8%	10%	7%	6%	4%



22. Overall, how concerned are you that cuts in government funding for higher education and research will have negative long-term effects on the quality of the U.S. workforce?

<u>Cuts in Government Funding For Higher Education</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Very concerned	39%	39%	37%	33%	47%
Somewhat concerned	37%	37%	31%	41%	34%
TOTAL CONCERNED	76%	76%	68%	74%	81%
Not very concerned	16%	15%	23%	17%	13%
Not at all concerned	7%	7%	6%	9%	5%
TOTAL NOT CONCERNED	23%	22%	29%	26%	18%
Don't know / refused	2%	2%	3%	--	1%

23. How concerned are you about having to change your business strategy or plans because you're unable to find the necessary talent?

<u>Changing Business Strategy Because of Lack of Talent</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Very concerned	17%	17%	22%	16%	19%
Somewhat concerned	35%	37%	24%	41%	32%
TOTAL CONCERNED	52%	54%	46%	57%	51%
Not very concerned	29%	31%	34%	23%	22%
Not at all concerned	16%	14%	19%	18%	26%
TOTAL NOT CONCERNED	45%	45%	53%	41%	48%
Don't know / refused	2%	2%	2%	2%	--

24. Over the past few years, have you recruited international hires because you were unable to find qualified talent in the U.S. to fill those positions?

<u>Past Few Years - Recruited International Hires</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Yes	11%	14%	10%	7%	4%
No	87%	84%	89%	93%	96%
Don't know / refused	2%	2%	1%	--	--



25. And, looking forward to the next few years, do you expect to recruit international hires because you will not be able to find qualified talent in the U.S.?

<u>Next Few Years - Recruit International Hires</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Yes	13%	15%	11%	6%	9%
No	82%	78%	87%	91%	89%
Don't know / refused	5%	7%	2%	2%	2%



DEMOGRAPHICS

D1. Gender

<u>Gender</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Male	54%	61%	49%	43%	34%
Female	46%	39%	51%	57%	66%

D2. How many years have you been at your current company?

<u>Years At Company</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Less than 3	13%	12%	14%	9%	18%
3-5	14%	14%	22%	14%	10%
6-10	22%	25%	16%	22%	15%
Over 10	50%	49%	46%	55%	56%
Don't know / refused	1%	*	1%	--	1%

D3. How many years have you been in current position at the company?

<u>Years At Your Position</u>	Total	National	Boston	Charlotte	Seattle
Less than 3	20%	17%	25%	20%	28%
3-5	19%	20%	22%	15%	14%
6-10	21%	24%	13%	22%	15%
Over 10	39%	38%	39%	44%	41%
Don't know / refused	1%	1%	1%	--	1%