

1023875783901293847573891293987519806820193847098509821730492817059812730492817509123409875234809857838  
4928357019283750918273598723840129385783290193847389021983758930219384720958275238576236462031587120394  
8712561651019837478950129837463257830129348756437821909865738210493875098127093874685783909102387578390  
1293847573891023987519806820193847098509821730492817059812730492817509123409875234809857838492835701928  
3750918273598723840129385783290193847389021983758930219384720958275238576236462031587120394871256165101  
29837463257830129348756437821909865738210493875098127093874685783909102387578390129384757389  
20193847098509821730492817059812730492817509123409875234809857838492835701928375091827359  
3290193847389021983758930219384720958275238576236462031587120394871256165101983747895012  
348756437821909865738210493875098127093874685783909102387578390129384757389102398751980  
321730492817059812730492817509123409875234809857838492835701928375091827359872384012938  
21983758930219384720958275238576236462031587120394871256165101983747895012983746325783  
909865738210493875098127093874685783909102387578390129384757389102398751980682019384709  
7059812730492817509123409875234809857838492835701928375091827359872384012938578329019384  
30219384720958275238576236462031587120394871256165101983747895012983746325783012934875643  
38210493875098127093874685783909102387578390129384757389102398751980682019384709850982173049  
2817059812730492817509123409875234809857838492835701928375091827359872384012938578329019384738902198375  
8930219384720958275238576236462031587120394871256165101983747895012983746325783012934875643782190986573  
8210493875098127093874685783909102387578390129384757389102398751980682019384709850982173049281705981273  
0492817509123409875234809857838492835701928375091827359872384012938578329019384738902198375893021938472  
0958275238576236462031587120394871256165101983747895012983746325783012934875643782190986573821049387509  
8127093874685783909102387578390129384757389102398751980682019384709850982173049281705981273049281750912  
3409875234809857838492835701928375091827359872384012938578329019384738902198375893021938472095827523857  
6236462031587120394871256165101983747895012983746325783012934875643782190986573821049387509812709387468  
5783909102387578390129384757389102398751980682019384709850982173049281705981273049281750912340987523480  
9857838492835701928375091827359872384012938578329019384738902198375893021938472095827523857623646203158  
7120394871256165101983747895012983746325783012934875643782190986573821049387509812709387468578390910238  
7578390129384757389102398751980682019384709850982173049281705981273049281750912340987523480985783849283  
5701928375091827359872384012938578329019384738902198375893021938472095827523857623646203158712039487125  
61651019837478950129837463257830129348756437821909865738210493875098127093874685783909102387523480  
4757389102398751980682019384709850982173049281705981273049281750912340987523480985783849283570192837509  
1827359872384012938578329019384738902198375893021938472095827523857623646203158712039487125616510198374  
7895012983746325783012934875643782190986573821049387509812709387468578390910238757839012938475738910239  
8751980682019384709850982173049281705981273049281750912340987523480985783849283570192837509182735987238  
4012938578329019384738902198375893021938472095827523857623646203158712039487125616510198374789501298374  
6325783012934875643782190986573821049387509812709387468578390910238757839012938475738910239875198068201  
9384709850982173049281705981273049281750912340987523480985783849283570192837509182735987238401293857832  
9019384738902198375893021938472095827523857623646203158712039487125616510198374789501298374632578301293  
4875643782190986573821049387509812709387468578390910238757839012938475738910239875198068201938470985098  
2173049281705981273049281750912340987523480985783849283570192837509182735987238401293857832901938473890  
2198375893021938472095827523857623646203158712039487125616510198374789501298374632578301293487564378219  
0986573821049387509812709387468578390910238757839012938475738910239875198068201938470985098217304928170  
5981273049281750912340987523480985783849283570192837509182735987238401293857832901938473890219837589302  
1938472095827523857623646203158712039487125616510198374789501298374632578301293487564378219098657382104  
9387509812709387468578390910238757839012938475738910239875198068201938470985098217304928170598127304928  
1750912340987523480985783849283570192837509182735987238401293857832901938473890219837589302193847209582  
7523857623646203158712039487125616510198374789501298374632578301293487564378219098657382104938750981270  
9387468578390910238757839012938475738910239875198068201938470985098217304928170598127304928175091234098  
7523480985783849283570192837509182735987238401293857832901938473890219837589302193847209582752385762364  
620315871203948712561651019837478950129837463257830129348756437821909865738210493875098127093874685783  
091023875783901293847573891023987519806820193847098509821730492817059812730492817509123409875234809857  
3849283570192837509182735987238401293857832901938473890219837589302193847209582752385762364620315871203  
948712561651019837478950129837463257830129348756437821909865738210493875098127093874685783909102387578  
19387578390129384757389102398751980682019384709850982173049281705981273049281750912340987523480985783  
849283570192837509182735987238401293857832901938473890219837589302193847209582752385762364620315871203



PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION

# BY THE NUMBERS

**Matriculating Student Survey 2014**

**COPYRIGHT © 2015 by the Physician Assistant Education Association**

This report is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives-NonCommercial 1.0 license. A reference copy of this license may be found at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd-nc/1.0/>

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

PAEA acknowledges the Research Council and its current chair, Richard Dehn, MPA, PA-C, for their review and guidance. The PAEA Research Department staff were responsible for the development and administration of the survey, as well as the preparation of this report:

Anthony A. Miller, MED, PA-C, Chief Policy & Research Officer, PAEA  
Lindsey M. Huang, MA, Director, Research & Senior Analyst, PAEA  
Rachel A. Hamann, Manager, Research, PAEA

**RECOMMENDED CITATION**

Physician Assistant Education Association, *By the Numbers: Matriculating Students 2014*, Washington, D.C.: PAEA, 2015. doi:10.17538/mss2015.002

---

For questions regarding the contents of this report, please contact Research Manager Rachel Hamann ([rhamann@PAEAonline.org](mailto:rhamann@PAEAonline.org)).



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AND PROGRAMS BY U.S. CENSUS REGION	3
TABLE 2. STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION AND YEAR ENROLLED IN A PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM	3
FIGURE 1. MONTH STUDENTS ENTERED INTO PA PROGRAMS VERSUS EXPECTED GRADUATION MONTH	4
TABLE 3. YEAR STUDENTS EXPECT TO GRADUATE FROM THE PA PROGRAM	4
TABLE 4. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN THE PAST WEEK	5
TABLE 5. MOST COMMON ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO MATRICULATION	6
TABLE 6. MILITARY EXPERIENCE	7
TABLE 7. MILITARY SERVICE	7
TABLE 8. YEARS OF ACTIVE DUTY	8
TABLE 9. MILITARY HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE	8
TABLE 10. YEARS OF MILITARY HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE	8
TABLE 11. MILITARY EXPERIENCE, BY GENDER	8
TABLE 13. MILITARY EXPERIENCE, BY RACE	9
TABLE 14. MILITARY EXPERIENCE, BY HIGHEST DEGREE HELD	9
TABLE 15. MILITARY EXPERIENCE, BY YEARS PASSED SINCE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED DEGREE	9
TABLE 16. HIGHEST DEGREE PRIOR TO PA SCHOOL	10
TABLE 17. UNDERGRADUATE AREA(S) OF STUDY	10
TABLE 18. UNDERGRADUATE GPA	11
TABLE 19. WHEN DECIDED TO BECOME A PA	12
TABLE 20. YEARS PASSED SINCE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED DEGREE	12
TABLE 21. TIME SPENT BETWEEN MOST RECENT DEGREE AND PA SCHOOL	12
TABLE 22. NUMBER OF PROGRAMS APPLIED, INTERVIEWED, AND ACCEPTED	13
TABLE 23. NUMBER OF SCHOOL YEARS APPLIED TO PA SCHOOL	13
TABLE 24. CONSIDERATION OF OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS AS CAREERS	13
TABLE 25. LEVEL OF INFLUENCE OF FACTORS ON DECISION TO BECOME A PA	14
TABLE 26. LEVEL OF INFLUENCE OF FACTORS ON DECISION TO ATTEND CURRENT PA PROGRAM	15
TABLE 27. STUDENTS' HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE AND TYPES OF EXPERIENCE	16
TABLE 28. WEEKS OF HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE BY TYPE	16
TABLE 29. PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY SERVICE	16
TABLE 30. WEEKS OF HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE BY SETTING LOCATION	17
TABLE 31. DESIRABILITY OF FUTURE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTS	18
TABLE 32. LIKELIHOOD OF PRACTICING IN A MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREA	18
TABLE 33. INTENDED SPECIALTY AND PRIMARY CARE	19
TABLE 34. EXPECTED SALARY AFTER GRADUATION	19
TABLE 35. RATING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS RELATED TO CAREER CHOICES	20
TABLE 36. AGE AT TIME OF MATRICULATION	21
TABLE 37. GENDER	21
TABLE 38. ETHNICITY	21
TABLE 39. RACE	21
TABLE 40. ENVIRONMENTS WHERE STUDENTS SPENT A MAJORITY OF THEIR LIVES	22



TABLE 41. CIVIL STATUS	22
TABLE 42. NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS	22
TABLE 43. GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY DEPENDENT STATUS	23
TABLE 44. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OBTAINED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS	23
TABLE 45. OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL DEBT	24
TABLE 46. AMOUNT OF OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL DEBT	24
TABLE 47. METHODS OF FINANCING COLLEGE (OR OTHER PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION), AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MEANS OF FINANCING	24
TABLE 48. INTENDED METHODS OF FINANCING PA EDUCATION, AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MEANS OF FINANCING	25
TABLE 49. CONSUMER DEBT	25
TABLE 50. TYPE AND AMOUNT OF CONSUMER DEBT	25
TABLE 51. ANTICIPATED DEBT LOAD FROM PA SCHOOL	26

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

In 2013, the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA or the Association) developed and administered its first Matriculating Student Survey (MSS). The MSS collects information from entering physician assistant (PA) students with the aim of improving education, recruitment, and retention. The survey was based on a previous student survey administered in collaboration with the American Academy of Physician Assistants, as well as question items from the Association of American Medical Colleges Matriculating Student Questionnaire and the Higher Education Research Institute's College Senior Survey.

## METHODOLOGY

Human subjects review determined that the study was exempt. In 2014, the MSS was emailed to 180 PAEA member program directors at the beginning of the month that their program admitted students into the first-year class. Program directors were instructed to forward a survey link to their students and encourage participation. In addition, program directors were requested to provide a head count of their first-year class in order to calculate program and national response rates. In order to achieve an adequate response rate, PAEA research staff sent reminder emails to non-respondents and conducted follow-up phone calls to programs with a response rate less than 80%. Following the identification of duplicate cases, the survey garnered 5,530 unique responses. Based upon program director class size responses and data from the 2014 Annual Program Survey, the response rate is estimated as 62%, an increase of 10% (1,133 responses) from the 2013 MSS.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In 2013, the results of the MSS were published in a series of issue briefs on topics of interest, such as demographics, indebtedness, health care and work experience, and education and career choice. This year, the results of the 2014 MSS are presented through data tables and figures with minimal narrative.

As PAEA continues to gather student data through the MSS, it plans to publish data in a series of tables and figures with longitudinal data in order to better identify changes or trends among PA students. This reporting style will also allow for better comparisons of PA student data to other health professions. Issue briefs will be published periodically when interesting trends are identified.



# CONCLUSION

The PAEA Research Council and Research Department staff would like to thank the program directors and faculty who facilitated the distribution of the survey, as well as the 5,330 students who participated in the survey. Seventy-two programs (40% of all responding programs) achieved the minimum 80% response rate to be entered into drawings for either a complimentary registration to the 2015 Education Forum in Washington, D.C., or a gift card for a student event (e.g., pizza party). Congratulations to Clarkson University and the University of South Alabama, winners of the Forum registration and gift card, respectively.

# PA PROGRAM PROFILES

**TABLE 1. Distribution of Students and Programs by U.S. Census Region**

	Students		Programs	
	n	%	n	%
Northeast	1,435	27.3	56	31.1
Midwest	1,085	20.6	42	23.3
South	2,010	38.2	60	33.3
West	732	13.9	22	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100.0</b>

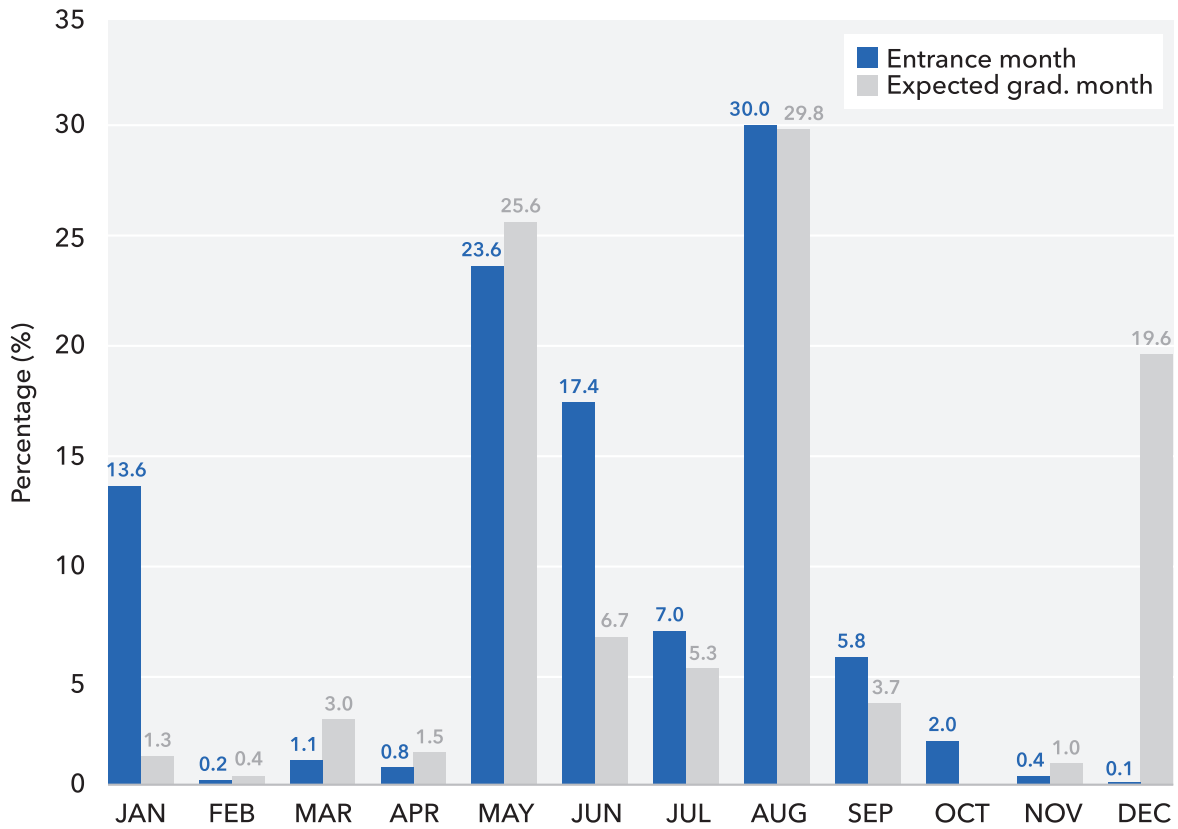
*Note: See Appendix A for U.S. Census Bureau regions.*

**TABLE 2. Students' Participation and Year Enrolled in a Pre-Professional Program**

Students' Participation	n	%
Entered into a pre-professional program	448	8.4
Directly admitted into professional phase of the program	4,857	91.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,305</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Year Enrolled in Pre-PA Program	n	%
2010	72	16.7
2011	235	54.5
2012	76	17.6
2013	21	4.9
2014	27	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**FIGURE 1. Month Students Entered into PA Programs versus Expected Graduation Month**



**TABLE 3. Year Students Expect to Graduate from the PA Program**

	n	%
2015	259	4.9
2016	4,445	84.8
2017	516	9.8
2018	19	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,239</b>	<b>100.0</b>



# HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**TABLE 4. Health and Well-Being in the Past Week**

	As good as it can be		Neutral		As bad as it can be		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Overall mental well-being	3,502	67.5	1,573	30.3	107	2.0	5,182
Overall emotional well-being	3,289	63.5	1,761	34.0	127	2.5	5,177
Overall quality of life	3,813	61.4	1,297	25.0	79	1.6	5,189
Overall physical well-being	3,173	61.1	1,896	36.5	115	2.2	5,184
Spiritual well-being	3,094	60.1	1,919	37.2	145	2.7	5,158
Level of social activity	2,370	45.7	2,328	44.9	483	9.3	5,181
Overall level of stress	1,646	31.7	2,873	55.7	669	12.9	5,188

	No fatigue		Neutral		Constant tiredness		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Level of fatigue	1,151	22.1	3,109	59.9	919	17.8	5,179

	Highly satisfied		Neutral		Not at all satisfied		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Level of social support	3,961	76.3	1,153	22.3	74	1.4	5,188

	No concerns		Neutral		Constant concerns		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Financial concerns	1,482	28.5	2,499	48.2	1,209	23.3	5,190

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the above statements on a scale of 1-10, with "10" representing the most positive end of the scale and "1" representing the most negative end of the scale. For dissemination purposes, scale points 8-10, 7-4, and 3-1 were collapsed and represent the positive, neutral, and negative parts of the scale.

**TABLE 5. Most Common Activities Prior to Matriculation**

	n	%
Being with friends/family	4,842	93.3
Paid work	3,700	71.3
Sleep	3,522	67.9
Exercise/sports	3,379	65.1
Solitary recreation	2,814	54.3

*Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice; thus, answers do not total 100%. Only the top five most frequent responses were included in this table.*

# MILITARY EXPERIENCE

**TABLE 6. Military Experience**

	n	%
Military experience	331	6.4
No military service	4,840	93.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,171</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Military Status</b>	n	%
Commitment complete	140	42.7
Regular military, active	103	31.4
Reserve military, active	60	18.3
Reserve military, inactive	23	7.0
Prefer not to answer	2	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 7. Military Service**

<b>Type of Service</b>	n	%
Regular service, Army	154	47.0
Reserve, Army	87	26.5
Regular service, Air Force	53	16.2
Regular service, Navy	49	14.9
Regular service, Marine Corps	22	6.7
Reserve, Navy	20	6.1
Reserve, Air Force	17	5.2
Reserve, Marine Corps	10	3.0
Regular service, Coast Guard	3	0.9
Regular service, other	1	0.3
Reserve, other	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>-</b>

*Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice; thus, answers do not total 100%.*

**TABLE 8. Years of Active Duty**

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	% reporting
Years	326	7.2	4.99	6.0	98.5

**TABLE 9. Military Health Care Experience**

	<i>n</i>	%
Received health care training/experience in the military	234	72.2
No health care training/experience in the military	90	27.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Type of Experience	<i>n</i>	%
Medic or corpsman	155	66.2
Clinical lab	15	6.4
Operating room	14	6.0
Patient administration	14	6.0
BLS/CLS	14	6.0
Medical logistics	11	4.7
Radiology	8	3.4
Emergency room/trauma	7	3.0
Pharmacy	6	2.6
Respiratory	6	2.6
Nutrition care	5	2.1
Mental health	3	1.3
Dental	2	0.9
Other	31	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>-</b>

Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice; thus, answers do not total 100%.

**TABLE 10. Years of Military Health Care Experience**

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	% reporting
Years	232	5.1	4.31	4.0	79.7

**TABLE 11. Military Experience, by Gender**

	<i>n</i>	%
Male	237	73.8
Female	84	26.2

**Total 321 100.0**

**TABLE 12. Military Experience, by Ethnicity**

	n	%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish in origin	29	9.0
Non-Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish in origin	281	87.5
Prefer not to answer	11	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 13. Military Experience, by Race**

	n	%
White	264	79.8
Asian	15	4.5
Black or African American	15	4.5
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5	1.5
Prefer not to answer	13	3.9
Other	10	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 14. Military Experience, by Highest Degree Held**

	n	%
Some college but no degree	29	8.8
Associate's degree	41	12.5
Bachelor of Arts	64	19.5
Bachelor of Science	161	48.9
Master's degree (health related)	16	4.9
Master's degree (non-health related)	12	3.6
Doctorate	4	1.2
Other	2	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 15. Military Experience, by Years Passed Since Most Recently Completed Degree**

	n	%
Not yet graduated	33	10.1
Less than 1 year	86	26.2
2-3 years	94	28.7
4-5 years	32	9.8
5 years or greater	83	25.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

# EDUCATION

**TABLE 16. Highest Degree Prior to PA School**

	n	%
High school diploma/GED	90	1.7
Some college but no degree	289	5.6
Associate's degree	73	1.4
Bachelor of Arts	815	15.7
Bachelor of Science	3,369	65.0
Other bachelor's degree	22	0.4
Some graduate education, but no degree	11	0.2
Master's degree (health or science related, e.g., MPH)	310	6.0
Master's degree (not health or science related, e.g., MBA)	127	2.5
Academic doctorate	18	0.3
Professional doctorate	27	0.5
Foreign medical graduate	20	0.4
Prefer not to answer	8	0.2
Other	3	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,182</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 17. Undergraduate Area(s) of Study**

	n	%
Natural sciences (e.g., biology, chemistry)	2,107	50.8
Health sciences (e.g., pre-medical studies)	813	19.6
Applied sciences (e.g., nursing, radiology)	600	14.5
Social sciences (e.g., psychology, political science)	521	12.6
Business	155	3.7
Foreign language	86	2.1
Humanities (e.g., history, philosophy)	72	1.7
Public health	65	1.6
Mathematics, engineering, and technology	61	1.5
General studies	41	1.0
Fine arts (e.g., studio art, performing arts)	28	0.7
Other	21	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,570</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 18. Undergraduate GPA**

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>%</i> reporting
GPA	4,945	3.58	0.27	3.60	97.1

# APPLICATION

**TABLE 19. When Decided to Become a PA**

	n	%
Before high school	41	0.8
During high school/before college	656	12.8
During the first two years of college	1,039	20.2
After receiving an associate's degree	71	1.4
During junior year of college	815	15.8
During senior year of college	388	7.5
After receiving a bachelor's degree	896	17.4
After receiving an advanced degree	193	3.8
While working in health care	846	16.4
While serving in the military	200	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 20. Years Passed Since Most Recently Completed Degree**

	n	%
Not yet graduated	357	6.9
Less than 1 year	1,691	32.9
2-3 years	1,756	34.1
4-5 years	532	10.3
5 years or greater	807	15.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 21. Time Spent Between Most Recent Degree and PA School**

	n	%
Worked to fulfill pre-PA health care requirements	2,464	47.9
Continued coursework to fulfill PA program requirements	2,391	46.5
Worked to improve finances	2,193	42.7
Volunteered to fulfill pre-PA health care requirements	1,503	29.2
Worked at another career	1,490	29.0

*Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice; thus, answers do not total 100%. Only the top five most frequent answer selections were included in this table.*



**TABLE 22. Number of Programs Applied, Interviewed, and Accepted**

	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mdn</b>	<b>% reporting</b>
Submitted an application	5,003	6.2	4.80	5.0	93.9
Granted an interview	4,857	3.0	2.37	2.0	91.1
Accepted an interview	4,851	2.2	1.49	2.0	91.0
Accepted into the program	5,010	1.6	0.99	1.0	94.0

**TABLE 23. Number of School Years Applied to PA School**

	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mdn</b>	<b>% reporting</b>
Years	5,151	1.3	0.94	1.0	96.6

**TABLE 24. Consideration of Other Health Professions as Careers**

	Considered but did not apply		Applied but was not accepted		Accepted but did not attend		Attended but did not complete		Completed or graduated		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Medical school (U.S.)	3,167	63.2	309	6.2	53	1.1	13	0.3	1	0.0	<b>3,543</b>
Physical therapy	1,209	24.3	12	0.2	31	0.6	4	0.1	11	0.2	<b>1,267</b>
Nurse practitioner	1,362	27.4	14	0.3	27	0.5	4	0.1	0	0.0	<b>1,407</b>
Public health	837	16.9	10	0.2	42	0.8	18	0.4	91	1.8	<b>998</b>
Medical school (outside U.S.)	831	16.8	23	0.5	27	0.5	15	0.3	22	0.4	<b>918</b>
Pharmacy	694	14.0	18	0.4	15	0.3	7	0.1	3	0.1	<b>737</b>
Dentistry	509	10.3	22	0.4	5	0.1	2	0.0	5	0.1	<b>543</b>
Alternative/ complementary/ naturopathic medicine	494	9.9	3	0.1	3	0.1	2	0.0	15	0.3	<b>517</b>
Occupational therapy	384	7.8	3	0.1	5	0.1	1	0.0	3	0.1	<b>396</b>
Chiropractic	319	6.4	0	0.0	10	0.2	1	0.0	6	0.1	<b>336</b>
Other	120	43.8	4	1.5	14	5.1	12	4.4	124	45.3	<b>274</b>

*Note: Respondents had the answer choice "did not consider" for each of the professions; these answer choices were excluded for analysis. The most common "other" responses were sports medicine/athletic training, EMT/paramedic, nutrition/dietician, and medical imaging.*

**TABLE 25. Level of Influence of Factors on Decision to Become a PA**

	Positive influence		No influence		Negative influence		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Friend	4,114	81.1	925	18.2	34	0.7	<b>5,073</b>
PA acquaintance	3,720	73.6	1,311	25.9	26	0.5	<b>5,057</b>
Family member	3,650	72.0	1,320	26.0	98	1.9	<b>5,068</b>
PA program literature	3,496	69.1	1,544	30.5	16	0.3	<b>5,056</b>
Other health professional	3,444	68.3	1,550	30.8	46	0.9	<b>5,040</b>
PA program faculty/staff	3,301	65.3	1,717	34.0	35	0.7	<b>5,053</b>
PA who treated me/my family	2,963	58.7	2,046	40.6	35	0.7	<b>5,044</b>
College/campus admissions department	2,667	52.8	2,315	45.8	70	1.4	<b>5,052</b>
Physician who treated me/my family	2,507	49.7	2,446	48.5	92	1.8	<b>5,045</b>
Other written publication	2,074	41.5	2,905	58.1	22	0.4	<b>5,001</b>
AAPA website/literature	1,957	38.7	3,082	57.8	20	0.4	<b>5,059</b>
Career counselor (high school or college)	1,574	31.3	3,353	66.7	102	2.0	<b>5,029</b>
Social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube)	1,542	30.6	3,445	64.5	46	0.9	<b>5,033</b>
PAEA website/literature	1,500	29.7	3,530	69.9	21	0.4	<b>5,051</b>
PAEA staff	227	4.5	4,749	94.7	39	0.8	<b>5,015</b>
AAPA staff	221	4.4	4,753	94.8	38	0.8	<b>5,012</b>
Project Access	213	4.2	4,768	95.0	37	0.7	<b>5,018</b>
Other factor	98	4.7	1,937	93.8	30	1.4	<b>2,065</b>

**TABLE 26. Level of Influence of Factors on Decision to Attend Current PA Program**

	Positive influence		No influence		Negative influence		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Conversation with program faculty	4,278	84.7	735	14.6	35	0.7	<b>5,048</b>
Program reputation	4,055	80.6	925	18.4	53	1.1	<b>5,033</b>
Program location	4,028	79.9	713	14.1	298	5.9	<b>5,039</b>
Clinical curriculum	3,976	79.1	1,003	20.0	48	1.0	<b>5,027</b>
Campus atmosphere	3,985	78.8	945	18.7	125	2.5	<b>5,055</b>
Interview experience	3,738	74.3	1,185	23.6	107	2.1	<b>5,030</b>
Admissions	3,734	74.0	1,229	24.4	80	1.6	<b>5,043</b>
Program mission	3,610	71.8	1,394	27.7	24	0.5	<b>5,028</b>
Faculty reputation	3,388	67.5	1,605	32.0	27	0.5	<b>5,020</b>
Program facilities	3,390	67.5	1,455	29.0	176	3.5	<b>5,021</b>
Credential awarded	3,322	66.1	1,624	32.3	78	1.6	<b>5,024</b>
Conversation with program alumni	3,327	66.0	1,684	33.4	31	0.6	<b>5,042</b>
Entrance requirements	3,243	64.4	1,703	33.8	91	1.8	<b>5,037</b>
Teaching methods	2,809	56.1	2,152	42.9	50	1.0	<b>5,011</b>
Hospital affiliations	2,514	50.0	2,429	48.3	81	1.6	<b>5,024</b>
Sense of security	2,465	49.1	2,346	46.8	206	4.1	<b>5,017</b>
Influence of spouse/partner/friend	2,440	48.6	2,515	50.1	64	1.3	<b>5,019</b>
Career placement services	2,029	40.5	2,951	58.9	32	0.6	<b>5,012</b>
Program literature	1,928	38.5	3,049	61.0	25	0.5	<b>5,002</b>
Diversity of faculty and staff	1,913	38.1	3,043	60.6	64	1.3	<b>5,020</b>
Cost of study	1,915	38.0	1,771	35.1	1,355	26.9	<b>5,041</b>
Diversity of students	1,804	36.0	3,109	62.0	104	2.1	<b>5,017</b>
Financial aid	1,704	34.0	2,948	58.8	358	7.1	<b>5,010</b>
Resident tuition status	1,618	30.4	3,033	60.4	368	7.3	<b>5,019</b>
International rotation	1,096	21.9	3,792	75.8	117	2.3	<b>5,005</b>
PAEA website	98	16.0	4,183	83.6	22	0.4	<b>5,003</b>
Dual degree option	586	11.7	4,320	86.3	100	1.9	<b>5,006</b>
Student housing	563	11.3	4,130	82.6	310	6.2	<b>5,003</b>
Other	116	7.0	1,516	92.1	14	0.9	<b>1,646</b>

*Note: The most common "other" responses were program's PANCE rates, interactions with program's students, and acceptance into the program.*

# PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE

**TABLE 27. Students' Health Care Experience and Types of Experience**

	n	%
Has health care work or volunteer experience	4,851	95.7
No work or volunteer health care experience	219	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,070</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Most Common Types of Health Care Experiences</b>	n	%
Nursing assistant	1,233	26.3
Medical assistant	1,018	21.7
EMT/paramedic	948	20.2
Emergency room technician	622	13.3
Home health aide	552	11.8

*Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice; thus, answers do not total 100%. Only the top five most frequent answer selections were included in this table. Over 50 unique types of experiences or settings were represented among respondents.*

**TABLE 28. Weeks of Health Care Experience by Type**

	n	M	SD	P10	P25	P50 (Mdn)	P75	P90	% reporting
Direct patient care	4,117	141.0	231.51	12.0	32.0	70.0	150.0	312.0	84.9
Other health care experience	2,425	89.7	185.30	5.0	10.0	35.0	100.0	200.0	49.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,370</b>	<b>182.6</b>	<b>287.82</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>200.0</b>	<b>416.0</b>	<b>90.1</b>

**TABLE 29. Participation in Volunteer Community Service**

	n	%
Has participated in community service	2,202	44.4
No community service experience	2,757	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,959</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 30. Weeks of Health Care Experience by Setting Location**

	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>P10</b>	<b>P25</b>	<b>P50 (Mdn)</b>	<b>P75</b>	<b>P90</b>	<b>% reporting</b>
International medical setting	576	13.7	87.87	1.0	1.0	2.0	6.0	18.6	26.2
International non-medical setting	421	18.5	53.49	1.0	2.0	4.0	10.0	52.0	19.1
U.S. medical setting	1,069	57.2	122.04	2.0	5.0	16.0	52.0	148.0	48.5
U.S. non-medical setting	1,005	41.4	130.30	2.0	3.0	10.0	40.0	100.0	45.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,961</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>146.14</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>148.0</b>	<b>89.1</b>

# FUTURE PRACTICE

**TABLE 31. Desirability of Future Practice Environments**

	Desirable		Neutral		Undesirable		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Suburban	3,907	78.3	830	16.6	257	5.1	4,994
Urban	3,360	67.9	1,142	23.1	448	9.0	4,950
Medically underserved areas	3,396	67.9	1,207	24.1	399	8.0	5,002
Rural	2,714	54.4	1,280	25.6	1,001	20.0	4,995
Inner city	1,970	39.4	1,451	29.1	1,569	31.4	4,990
Outside the U.S.	1,917	38.4	1,355	27.2	1,718	34.4	4,990
Military	1,228	24.7	1,577	31.7	2,174	43.6	4,979
Federal/state prison system	474	9.5	1,193	24.0	3,294	66.4	4,961

**TABLE 32. Likelihood of Practicing in a Medically Underserved Area**

	n	%
Very likely	902	17.9
Likely	1,810	35.9
Neutral	1,479	29.3
Unlikely	548	10.9
Very unlikely	309	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,048</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 33. Intended Specialty and Primary Care**

<b>Primary Care</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Students who indicated intending to practice in one or more primary care specialties	3,254	64.4

<b>Specific Specialty</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Family/general practice	2,589	51.2
Emergency medicine	2,317	45.8
Surgical subspecialties	1,899	37.6
General surgery	1,498	29.6
General internal medicine	1,204	23.8
General pediatrics	1,148	22.7
Dermatology	1,046	20.7
Internal medicine subspecialties	959	19.0
Obstetrics/gynecology/women's health	929	18.4
Hospitalist	875	17.3
Pediatrics subspecialties	875	17.3
Undecided	806	15.9
Mental health	55	1.1
Geriatrics	25	0.5
Prefer not to answer	17	0.3
Other	46	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,288</b>	<b>–</b>

*Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice; thus, answers do not total 100%.*

**TABLE 34. Expected Salary after Graduation**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than \$50,000	7	0.1
\$50,000 to \$59,999	32	0.6
\$60,000 to \$69,999	204	4.0
\$70,000 to \$79,999	1,069	21.2
\$80,000 to \$89,999	2,237	44.4
\$90,000 to \$99,999	1,190	23.6
\$100,000 or greater	304	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,043</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 35. Rating of the Importance of Factors Related to Career Choices**

	Essential		Very important		Somewhat important		Not important		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Work-life balance	3,268	65.0	1,595	31.7	152	3.0	11	0.2	<b>5,026</b>
Availability of jobs	3,152	62.7	1,719	34.2	135	2.7	21	0.4	<b>5,027</b>
Secure, stable future	3,137	62.5	1,653	32.9	213	4.2	15	0.3	<b>5,018</b>
Ability to pay off debt	2,702	53.7	1,683	33.4	428	8.5	220	4.4	<b>5,033</b>
Supervising physician relationship	2,579	51.4	1,952	38.9	432	8.6	56	1.1	<b>5,019</b>
High income potential	1,206	24.0	2,496	49.8	1,206	24.0	109	2.2	<b>5,017</b>
Expression of personal values	1,159	23.2	2,387	47.7	1,292	25.8	163	3.3	<b>5,001</b>
Flexible working schedule	996	19.9	2,340	46.7	1,561	31.1	115	2.3	<b>5,012</b>
Working for social change	973	19.5	1,961	39.3	1,732	34.7	328	6.6	<b>4,994</b>
High level of autonomy	892	17.8	2,417	48.3	1,527	30.5	173	3.5	<b>5,009</b>
Creativity and initiative	881	17.7	2,375	47.6	1,531	30.7	203	4.1	<b>4,990</b>
Leadership potential	837	16.7	2,295	45.8	1,652	33.0	225	4.5	<b>5,009</b>
Opportunity for innovation	707	14.1	2,155	43.0	1,861	37.2	284	5.7	<b>5,007</b>
Social recognition of status	305	6.1	1,023	20.5	2,135	42.7	1,537	30.7	<b>5,000</b>



# DEMOGRAPHICS

**TABLE 36. Age at Time of Matriculation**

	n	M	SD	P10	P25	P50 (Mdn)	P75	P90	% reporting
Years	5,081	26.3	5.62	22.0	23.0	24.0	28.0	33.0	95.3

**TABLE 37. Gender**

	n	%
Female	3,680	72.9
Male	1,347	26.7
Prefer not to answer	24	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,051</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 38. Ethnicity**

	n	%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish in origin	313	6.2
Non-Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish in origin	4,625	91.8
Prefer not to answer	100	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,043</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 39. Race**

	n	%
White	4,146	82.4
Asian	405	8.1
Black or African American	157	3.1
Multi-racial	58	1.2
American Indian or Alaskan Native	37	0.7
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	29	0.6
Prefer not to answer	130	2.9
Other	71	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,033</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 40. Environments Where Students Spent a Majority of Their Lives**

	n	%
Suburban	3,147	62.5
Rural	1,605	31.9
Urban	965	19.2
Inner city	324	6.4
Overseas	185	3.7
Military	8	0.2
Prefer not to answer	36	0.7
Other	10	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,280</b>	<b>-</b>

*Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer choice; thus, answers do not total 100%.*

**TABLE 41. Civil Status**

	n	%
Single	3,541	70.2
Married	1,282	25.4
Divorced	104	2.1
Domestic partnership/civil union	61	1.2
Separated, but still legally married	27	0.5
Widowed	3	0.0
Prefer not to answer	29	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,047</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 42. Number of Dependents**

	n	M	SD	Mdn	% reporting
Dependents	748	2.1	1.20	2.0	14.0

**TABLE 43. Gross Household Income by Dependent Status**

	Dependent		Non-Dependent	
	n	%	n	%
Less than \$25,000	35	2.1	1,038	30.6
\$25,000 to \$49,999	106	6.5	689	20.3
\$50,000 to \$74,999	180	11.1	494	14.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999	233	14.3	289	8.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	390	24.0	237	7.0
\$150,000 to \$199,999	206	12.7	87	2.6
\$200,000 or greater	203	12.5	84	2.5
Do not know/prefer not to answer	275	16.9	479	14.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,628</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,397</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: "Dependent" indicates students are claimed by their parent(s)/guardian(s) for tax reasons, while "non-dependent" indicates students claim themselves for tax reasons.

**TABLE 44. Highest Level of Education Obtained by Parents or Guardians**

	n	%
Some high school	174	3.5
High school/GED	731	14.5
Some college	560	11.1
Associate's degree	410	8.2
Bachelor's degree	1,663	33.1
Master's degree	976	19.4
Academic doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)	124	2.5
Professional doctorate (e.g., MD, DO, PharmD, JD)	389	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,027</b>	<b>100.0</b>

# INDEBTEDNESS

**TABLE 45. Outstanding Educational Debt**

	n	%
Outstanding educational debt	2,407	47.8
No outstanding educational debt	2,484	49.3
Prefer not to answer	144	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,035</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 46. Amount of Outstanding Educational Debt**

	n	M	SD	P10	P25	P50 (Mdn)	P75	P90	% reporting
Amount of Debt	2,233	\$35,717	\$32,573	\$6,500	\$13,500	\$26,000	\$45,500	\$80,000	92.8

Note: Amounts of debt greater than \$250,000 were coded as missing and excluded from analysis.

**TABLE 47. Methods of Financing College (or Other Pre-Physician Assistant Education), as Percentage of Total Means of Financing**

	n	M	SD	P10	P25	P50 (Mdn)	P75	P90	% reporting
Loans	2,262	54.6	32.52	10.0	25.0	50.0	85.0	100.0	42.4
Other family support	2,316	51.2	34.37	10.0	20.0	50.0	85.0	100.0	43.5
Scholarships or awards from the college/university	1,823	36.8	29.55	5.0	10.0	25.0	55.0	85.0	34.2
Money earned by spouse or partner	283	31.4	28.82	5.0	10.0	20.0	50.0	80.0	5.3
Scholarships awarded from external sources	1,349	29.6	30.47	5.0	5.0	15.0	50.0	80.0	25.3
Personal income and savings	1,527	25.7	27.78	5.0	8.0	15.0	30.0	78.4	28.7
Work study program	337	10.9	15.43	2.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	20.0	6.3
Other source(s)	239	57.8	35.76	10.0	25.0	60.0	100.0	100.0	4.5

Note: Zeros (0) were excluded from analysis.

**TABLE 48. Intended Methods of Financing PA Education, as Percentage of Total Means of Financing**

	n	M	SD	P10	P25	P50 (Mdn)	P75	P90	% reporting
Loans	3,649	85.1	22.51	50.0	80.0	97.0	100.0	100.0	68.5
Other family support	1,149	42.1	36.10	5.0	10.0	25.0	80.0	100.0	21.6
Scholarships awarded from external sources	355	34.3	35.34	5.0	5.0	15.0	55.0	100.0	6.7
Money earned by spouse or partner	516	27.0	26.09	5.0	10.0	20.0	40.0	70.0	9.7
Work study program	47	26.1	37.18	1.8	5.0	10.0	20.0	100.0	0.9
Scholarships or awards from the college/university	434	24.5	25.41	5.0	5.0	15.0	30.8	60.0	8.1
Personal income and savings	1,164	22.2	25.11	5.0	5.0	10.0	25.0	50.0	21.8
Other source(s)	156	69.1	35.01	10.0	40.0	90.0	100.0	100.0	2.9

Note: Zeros (0) were excluded from analysis.

**TABLE 49. Consumer Debt**

	n	%
Holds consumer debt	1,693	33.8
No consumer debt	3,079	61.5
Prefer not to answer	234	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,006</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 50. Type and Amount of Consumer Debt**

	n	M	SD	P10	P25	P50 (Mdn)	P75	P90	% reporting
Credit cards	1,047	\$5,118	\$11,385	\$500	\$1,200	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$10,000	61.8
Car loans	857	\$12,911	\$9,412	\$3,500	\$6,000	\$10,000	\$17,000	\$25,000	50.6
Mortgage(s)	428	\$156,136	\$106,461	\$60,000	\$90,750	\$130,000	\$200,000	\$293,700	25.3
Other consumer debt	88	\$10,855	\$25,359	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	5.2
Total consumer debt	1,556	\$54,116	\$91,794	\$1,400	\$4,000	\$12,000	\$65,750	\$174,300	91.9

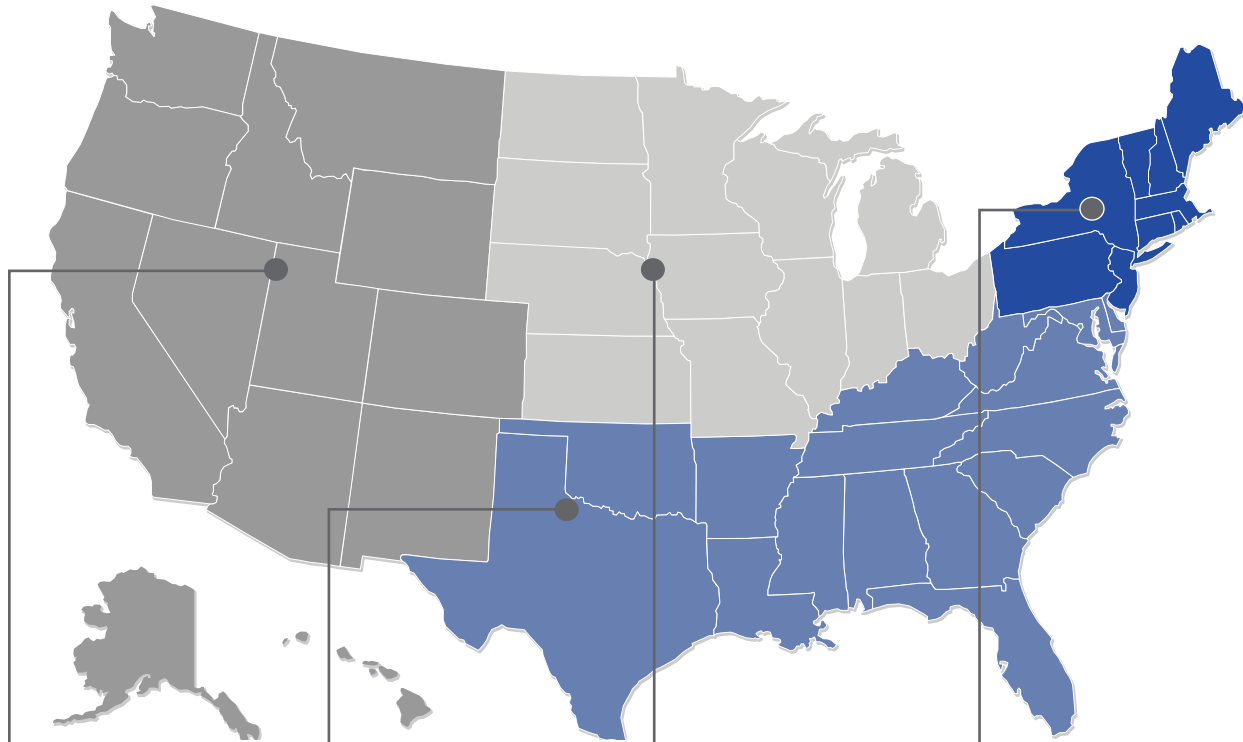
Note: Zeros (0) were excluded from analysis.

**TABLE 51. Anticipated Debt Load from PA School**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
\$0	456	9.1
Less than \$25,000	334	6.7
\$25,000 to \$49,999	495	9.9
\$50,000 to \$74,999	757	15.1
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,009	20.2
\$100,000 to \$124,999	970	19.4
\$125,000 to \$149,999	512	10.2
\$150,000 to \$174,999	288	5.8
\$175,000 to \$199,999	86	1.7
\$200,000 or greater	92	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,999</b>	<b>100.0</b>

# APPENDIX A

## U.S. Census Bureau Regions



### Region 4 WEST

Arizona  
Colorado  
Idaho  
New Mexico  
Montana  
Utah  
Nevada  
Wyoming  
Alaska  
California  
Hawaii  
Oregon  
Washington

### Region 3 SOUTH

Delaware  
District of Columbia  
Florida  
Georgia  
Maryland  
North Carolina  
South Carolina  
Virginia  
West Virginia  
Alabama  
Kentucky  
Mississippi  
Tennessee  
Arkansas  
Louisiana  
Oklahoma  
Texas

### Region 2 MIDWEST

Indiana  
Illinois  
Michigan  
Ohio  
Wisconsin  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
North Dakota  
South Dakota

### Region 1 NORTHEAST

Connecticut  
Maine  
Massachusetts  
New Hampshire  
Rhode Island  
Vermont  
New Jersey  
New York  
Pennsylvania