

## 持大學文憑 找工更容易

Are college degrees still worth it in this economy?

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雖然許多大學畢業生在經濟衰退期間找不到理想的工作，搬回父母家，成為「啃老一族」，但一項研究發現，大學文憑還是為剛畢業的學生提供較佳的條件和保護，使他們比低學歷者更容易找到工作。

丕優經濟變動性專案(Pew Economic Mobility Project)的研究發現，最近數年大學剛畢業的學生薪資下跌，而且尚未恢復到過去的水準，但失業率和學生貸款卻上升，找到工作的大學畢業生，其工作內容和學歷並不相稱。儘管大學畢業生遭遇這些經濟衰退的負面影響，但與學歷較低者比較，這些負面影響對低學歷者的衝擊更大。

經濟衰退之後導致民眾質疑大學文憑的價值，根據大學理事會的調查，今年公立大學的學雜費平均上漲5%，達到8655元，而2011年畢業的學生平均貸款為2萬6600元。這些是取得大學文憑的成本。但專家指出，縱使大學學費上漲，大學文憑還是相當有價值，可以使擁有大學文憑者一生至少賺到100萬元。

目前擁有大學以上文憑者的失業率為3.9%，擁有副學士學位者的失業率為6.9%，而只有高中學歷者的失業率為8%。

以上的數字包含所有年齡層的成年人。丕優希望進一步調查經濟衰退對21到24歲的大學畢業生就業的影響。丕優的研究顯示，經濟衰退前，此年齡層的大學畢業生的就業率為69%；經濟衰退期間，降到67%；截至2011年12月，再降為65%。但這些數字比學歷較低者高出甚多，顯示大學文憑仍有價值。

資料來源：(1) 2013年1月10日 世界日報 (The World Journal)  
(2) 2013年1月9日 美聯社 (Associated Press)

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Not to discredit all those tales of newly minted college graduates living in their parents' basements while looking for a job, but an analysis of federal data shows that as a group, young adults with bachelor's degrees are faring much better than their less-educated counterparts.

Findings, which complement multiple studies showing that a college degree significantly increases a young adult's chances of gaining economic security, suggest that the advantage held true through the recent economic recession.

"Despite the recession and the labor market outcomes that individuals experience, the college degree still offers a great deal of potential," says Diana Elliott, research manager for the Pew Charitable Trusts project on economic mobility. Though college graduates face "real and troubling" challenges finding good jobs, they remain better positioned to overcome them, she said.

Using the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey data, the study compared job and salary trends for adults ages 21 to 24 from 2003 and 2011. Researchers sought to capture employment patterns before, during and after the recession, which the study defines as having run from December 2007 to June 2009.

Among findings:

Jobless rates were most severe for young adults with no college degree. Employment rates before and after the recession declined 7% among bachelor's degree holders, 11% among associate's degree holders and 16% for those with only a high school diploma.

All groups saw wage drops during the recession, but the falloffs stabilized most quickly for bachelor's degree holders. Average weekly wages dropped 5% for bachelor's degree holders, and twice that (10%) for workers with high school diplomas only. Associate's degree holders took the steepest hit, 12%.

College graduates continued to be employed in relatively high-status jobs at higher rates than their less-credentialed counterparts, and declines in the proportion taking jobs that did not require a college degree were modest - 3% vs. 6% for associate's degree holders.

Although the non-working population increased for all three groups studied, researchers found little evidence that significant numbers of young adults were investing in more education or training.

During past recessions, young adults were typically encouraged to pursue additional schooling as a shelter against the economic downturn and to improve their chances of getting a better-paying job in the long term.

Elliott said the Pew study did not explore factors contributing to enrollment trends. Economist Heidi Shierholz, lead author of a study last May on the labor market prospects for the college graduating class of 2012, speculates that rising levels of student debt and declining family wealth played a role.

"We could be having some adjustments (in which) those who are sheltering in school are being offset by those who can't find a job so they have to quit school," says Shierholz, an economist with the Economic Policy Institute. Similarly, she says, "if your parents just saw the value of their house (drop), they might be much less able to help you finance college."

Shierholz, who has not reviewed the Pew study, cautioned that job opportunities for young people "remain very much at crisis levels" and that the data support anecdotal stories of recent graduates struggling to find work.

"There's a much bigger group (of young adults) who are neither working nor in school," she said. "And it does beg the question, how are they getting by?"