

What PHAA's Class of '96 did First Semester after Graduation

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Sept. 30, 1997.

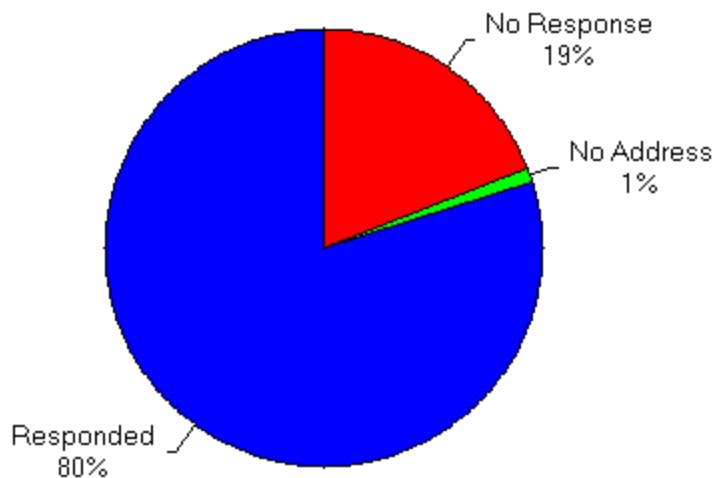
[This article first appeared in Issue 61 (Winter 1997-1998) of the *PA Homeschoolers* newsletter.]

Pennsylvania Homeschoolers Accreditation Agency (PHAA) is a non-profit corporation and one of three home education programs currently awarding diplomas to home education graduates under the Pennsylvania Home Education Law (Act 169 of 1988). Beginning with a graduating class of only 6 students in 1991, its numbers of graduates have risen to 161 in 1996 and 270 in 1997.

"How will they do when they get out into the "real world" people have asked many times of homeschoolers. Will they be able to deal with a world outside of and beyond the confines of their family? (Imagining perhaps that homeschoolers spend the first eighteen years of their lives living within the four walls of their homes.) The survey results related here cannot completely answer this question, for it is a large question, but it begins an answer.

In the spring of 1997, the Pennsylvania Homeschoolers Accreditation Agency (PHAA) conducted a survey which was sent to the parents of its 1996 graduating class. The questionnaires were sent to the parents of all 161 graduates.

Response Rate to Survey



As shown in the chart above, 80% (129) responded to the questionnaire or its follow-up, while 19% (31) did not respond, and 1% (1) of the questionnaires were returned by the post office because of an address change. The average number of years of homeschooling at the high school level (available in the PHAA files) for those who responded was 3.44 years. The average for those who failed to respond was 3.27 years. Thus there was a slightly higher response rate from longer-term homeschoolers.

The remainder of the results will be those reported for the 129 graduates who responded to the survey.

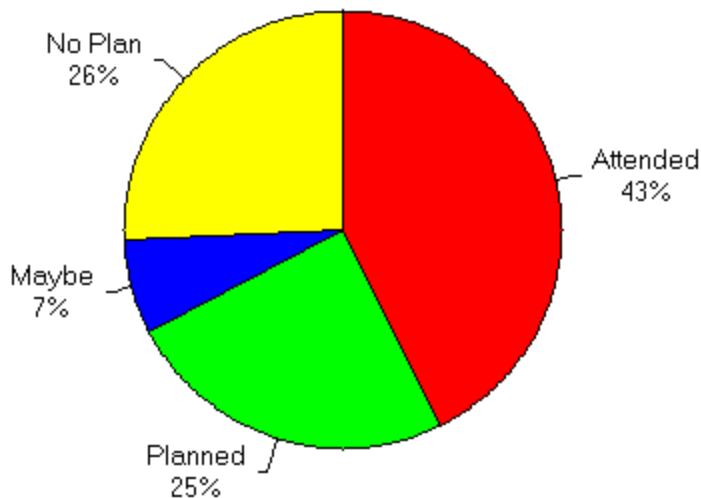
What They Did in Fall '96



What Do Homeschoolers Do Right After Graduation

As shown in the chart above, 43% of the 129 graduates attended college in the fall of '96, while 32% found employment outside of the family, 7% became self-employed or went into businesses with other family members, 6% engaged in other forms of training including paramedic training, part-time college, and college correspondence courses, 3% found apprenticeships, 6% engaged in volunteer work, and 4% were unemployed. According to comments included by their parents, two of the five who were unemployed during the fall term went on to enter college during the spring term.

College Attendance and Plans



College and College Plans

As shown in the chart above, 43% entered college in the fall while another 25% planned to college, 7% held open the possibility of college, and 25% did not plan to enter college. Several of those who are listed here as planning to enter college actually reported that they had enrolled to begin college in the spring semester of the '96-97 school year or the fall semester of the '97 school year. The remaining results of the survey cover the 55 respondents who entered college in the fall of 1996 following their graduation from PHAA on July 13, 1996..

How do Homeschoolers Do in College

We asked the parents to report the exact Grade Point Average obtained by the student during his or her first semester of college. In order to make sure that we would obtain accurate GPAs, we also asked the parents whether the student would be willing to have the college send us the transcript (if we sent \$10). Only 9% (5) said that they the student would not be willing to have the college send us the transcript.

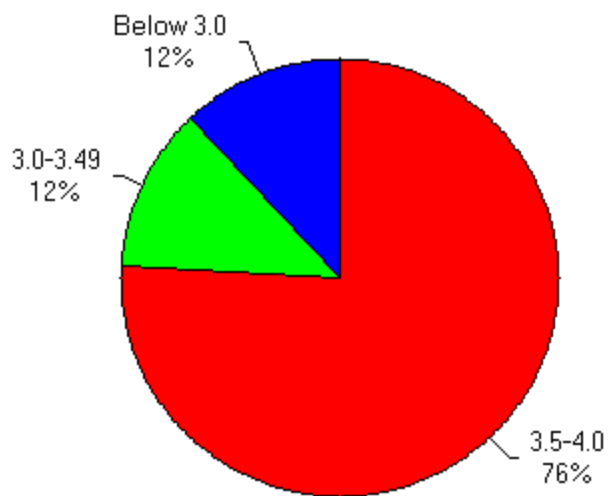
The colleges attended by these students were the following (parentheses indicate when more than one student attending that college):

- Academy of the New Church College
- Art Institute of Pittsburgh
- Asbury College
- Baptist Bible College, Clarks Summit PA
- Bennington College
- Bob Jones University (2)
- Calvary Chapel Bible College, Murrietta CA

- Campbell University
- Career Training Academy/Medical
- Christendom College
- Eastern Mennonite University
- Elizabethtown College
- Finger Lakes Community College
- Geneva College
- Grace College (2)
- Harrisburg Area Community College (2)
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- Kutztown University
- Lebanon Valley College
- Luzerne County Community College
- Maranatha Baptist Bible College
- Mercyhurst College, Erie PA
- Messiah College (3)
- Mt Vernon Nazarene College
- New Tribes Bible Institute
- Northampton Area Community College (2)
- Oral Roberts University
- Penn State University State College Campus (2)
- Penn State York Campus (2)
- Pensacola Christian College
- Philadelphia College of Bible (2)
- Princeton University
- Ricks College
- St. Joseph's University
- Thadeus Stevens State School of Technology
- Thomas Aquinas College, CA
- Tuscalum College, TN
- University of Akron
- University of Massachusetts
- University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- University of Toledo
- Valley Forge Christian College
- Westmoreland County Community College
- West Chester University
- Wheaton College
- Word of Life Bible Institute

We received GPA reports for 94% (51) of the students.. Of the four who didn't report, one reported that the exact GPA for the fall semester was "A", two left the space blank, and the fourth reported attendance at a college which does not use grades (Bennington College).

Grade Point Averages



As shown in the chart above, 76% scored 3.5 or better. At many colleges these students would be said to have made the "Dean's List." An additional 12% scored at 3.0 or above but less than 3.5. At many colleges these students would be said to have made the "Honor Roll." Only 12% scored below a 3.0 G.P.A. The median grade point average of those who responded 3.65. (4.0 is "A", 3.0 is "B"). The mean grade point average was 3.51.

Thus a main finding of this study was that 76% of the 1996 home education graduates who entered college during the fall right after graduation made the equivalent of the "Dean's List" during their first semester of college. This result seems to indicate that home education graduates are exceptionally well prepared to succeed in college.

Weaknesses of this Study and Suggestions for Further Research

Every study has its weaknesses, and this study is no exception. Often weaknesses of a study lead to suggestions for future research. Among these weaknesses and suggestions for future weaknesses are the following:

1. About 19% of the parents did not respond to the survey. It is possible that results, with the additional students included, would be different. Perhaps future research could attempt to contact the remaining graduates by telephone or additional follow-up questionnaires.

2. The PHAA graduates in this study represent an undetermined proportion of the home education graduates in Pennsylvania. Results for PHAA might not be representative of the entire population. Future research could examine all of the homeschooling entrants at a particular college in Pennsylvania and determine what proportion were PHAA graduates and whether PHAA graduates' have similar profiles to the other homeschool graduates. Penn State might be an appropriate location for such a study since, according to Ann

Rohrbach, Assistant Dean of Admissions 17 of the 18 homeschoolers who applied in 1996 were admitted while 33 of the 33 homeschoolers who applied in 1997 were admitted.

3. It remains to be determined whether the parental reports of students' GPA's were accurate. We are confident in their accuracy because more than 90% expressed a willingness to help us obtain the official transcript. A request for actual transcripts could be sent to a sample of the students of this study and a comparison could be made of the actual transcripts with the reported GPA's.

4. This study only examines GPA performance of those homeschoolers' who enter college in the fall immediately following graduation. Future studies could follow up the members of this class who might enter college at a later time and could determine those entrants GPA's during their first semesters of college