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Author

ETMANSKI, Brittany

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Abstract

A growing body of research has focused on the employment outcomes of PhD graduates from the USA, but substantially less literature has focused on their aspirations prior to graduation. As tenure-track positions have become increasingly less common, PhD students attending US institutions may have shifted their career aspirations accordingly. Drawing on the U.S. National Research Council's (NRC) 2006 Assessment of Research Doctoral Programs, this paper assessed whether PhD students' career aspirations have shifted away from (or been "cooled out" of) academic careers. Females and students in engineering as well as the physical and mathematical sciences were most likely to have shifted their career aspirations away from academia. Further, institutional prestige did not have a significant effect on students' career aspirations at any level of analyses. Contrary to past research, US PhD students' academic career aspirations remained relatively static over time, refuting the cooling out hypothesis. The implication of these results suggests that PhD students may shift away from their academic career aspirations at another time point. Therefore, future research would benefit

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from examining whether these students shift their career aspirations prior to entrance into the PhD program. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Etmanski, Brittany, E-Mail: bettmansk@uwaterloo.ca