

# Nevada contending with brain drain

By J. Patrick Coolican, Las Vegas Sun

Eric Glyman is exactly the type of young person Nevada needs to reinvent itself.

The 20-year-old graduate of Green Valley High School was a valedictorian, science olympiad and member of the speech and debate and track and field teams.

Now a junior at Harvard, he's majoring in Chinese and economics.

And he's probably not coming back. Opportunities are much better elsewhere.

Nevada, like many states and countries, has always suffered from a flight of human capital, or "brain drain," as it's often called. Many of our best and brightest take a pass on UNR and UNLV, and once they matriculate at elite universities elsewhere, they wind up in regions that are financial and technological centers and offer more varied cultural and recreational lives.

This brain drain problem was mitigated during the boom, as tens of thousands of college-degreed Americans came to Nevada for opportunity. The valley was flush with architects, construction management experts, marketers, attorneys, accountants and other professionals. In fact, today there are roughly 191,000 working-age adults in the valley with bachelor's degrees who weren't born in Nevada, according to an analysis of census data by Alan Berube of the Brookings Institution.

Although we enjoyed a migration surge of the educated, we also

had a massive influx of less educated service and construction workers, and we were left with a workforce that was less educated than most large urban areas – 21 percent of Clark County residents had bachelor’s degrees as of 2009, compared with the national average of 27 percent, according to census data compiled by the Chronicle of Higher Education. By contrast, 28 percent of residents of Maricopa County, where Phoenix sits, have degrees; in Salt Lake County, it’s 29 percent.

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