

Guest Column: Philadelphia college students want Amazon's HQ2



Campus Philly's Creatadelphia event.

By Deborah Diamond – Guest Columnist
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Amazon wants a second home where talent thrives and, it turns out, the feeling is mutual in Philadelphia.

Campus Philly asked college students what difference it would make to them if Amazon chose Philly for its “HQ2.” (Students could choose more than one answer, so these don’t total to 100 percent.) Here’s what 173 of them told us:

- More than two-thirds (69 percent) want an internship at Amazon. In the Philly region where 81 percent of students have internships in college — more than the national average of 42percent — it makes sense that internships are top of mind for students contemplating such a marquee employer in town.
- Amazon will have its choice of Philly graduates, with 65 percent of students saying they would want to work there after they graduate. With Philly tech and engineering degrees up 13 percent in the last two years, Amazon will find more of the types of skills they're looking for in their own backyard (if they were here).
- More than half of students — 57 percent — say Amazon HQ2 in Philly would be a reason to stay in Philly after graduating. Not all of those students say that because they would want a job at Amazon. Eleven percent of students who would stay in a Philly with an Amazon HQ2 wouldn't seek a job there.
- Forty-one percent are ready to dig in during class time on an Amazon project, saying they'd like to solve an Amazon challenge as part of their course work.

What do we at Campus Philly make of all this? We already know that students love Philadelphia — 67 percent told us they'd like to stay after they graduate. But, we also know they need a job market that is dynamic enough to generate multiple job offers and choices for them. Students say they expect to have three jobs by their 10-year college reunion, meaning they're looking to move from that first job just two or three years after they land it. Those moves become a whole lot easier when there's competition for talent and multiple large employers vying for them.

Amazon's HQ2 in Philadelphia would mean a local talent pipeline for the company, but also a shot in the arm for Philadelphia's college students as another reason to engage off campus and stay here after they graduate.

Deborah Diamond is president of Campus Philly, a nonprofit organization that fuels economic growth by encouraging college students to study, explore, live and work in Greater Philadelphia.