

101: TODAY'S STUDENTS



WHO ARE TODAY'S STUDENTS?

38%

OLDER THAN 25



58%

WORK WHILE
IN COLLEGE



26%

PARENTING



47%

FINANCIALLY
INDEPENDENT



42%

AT OR BELOW

FEDERAL
POVERTY
LINE

13%

LIVE ON CAMPUS



40%

PART-TIME



57%

ATTEND



**STUDENT ENROLLMENT
INCREASES 1996-2010:**

↑ 11% WHITE

↑ 240% HISPANIC

↑ 72% BLACK

HOW ARE TODAY'S STUDENTS DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE PAST?

Today's students are more diverse than any previous generation of college students: they're diverse in age, race, and income level. They're more mobile and may not live on campus. Most participate in the workforce, either full-time or part-time. Work and family responsibilities beyond the classroom—whether that is on-campus or online—often compete with today's students' educational goals. Younger workers are changing jobs as many as four times by age 32, so lifelong learning and continuing education are fast-becoming the norm.

Despite the changing demographic realities, the federal role in supporting postsecondary education is largely the remnant of policies designed for a time when most students graduated high school and immediately went to a four-year or trade school. Federal policy needs to be updated to support a system that works for everyone, including today's students – a system where postsecondary providers can deliver the skills and knowledge that employers seek, where programs are flexible and support student success, and all types of learning—on campus, online, competency-based, and more—are fully recognized.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO TODAY'S STUDENTS FACE?

AFFORDABILITY

47%

FINANCIALLY
INDEPENDENT



42%

AT OR BELOW

FEDERAL
POVERTY
LINE

PART-TIME VS. FULL-TIME

40%

PART-TIME



COMPLETION

38%

OF STUDENTS



with additional
financial, work,
and family
obligations
**leave school in their
first year²**

WORK COMMITMENTS

58%

WORK WHILE
IN COLLEGE



PARENTING

26%



EMERGENCY COSTS



Early data from the University Innovation Alliance (UIA), a coalition of eleven public research universities, shows that about **4,000 Pell-eligible college seniors**, who are in good academic standing, are at risk of being dropped from their classes or not allowed to graduate because **less than \$1,000 is owed to their institutions.**¹

VETERAN-STATUS

4% OF
UNDERGRADS
ARE VETERANS



but they face unique challenges, such as applying competencies learned in military service to civilian careers and academics.

HOW CAN FEDERAL POLICY HELP SET TODAY'S STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS?

Outcomes are critical for today's students—including completion, employment, equity, and value—to be gained from higher learning. Federal policy needs to catch up to the way that today's students are learning and reward institutions and systems that deliver the strongest career and educational outcomes.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID should be redesigned with a focus on the needs of a wide range of students, especially those who work full- or part-time, are financially independent, or need to enroll in courses outside the traditional two-semester approach. Redesign approaches could include rethinking Pell eligibility for workforce programs, or simpler loan repayment to match today's students' needs.

DATA gathered through federal, state, and workforce data systems should cover the full spectrum of today's students, not just first-time, full-time students. Today's students, families, schools, and taxpayers need clear information to make informed choices about higher learning.

¹ https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Completion%20Grants%20release%208_16_17%20FINAL.pdf

² <https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics>

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