WHO ARE TODAY’S STUDENTS?

Nationally, today’s students are more diverse than any previous generation of college students: 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.

NATIONWIDE, TODAY’S STUDENTS ARE:

37% OLDER THAN 25
64% WORKING WHILE IN COLLEGE
24% PARENTING
13% LIVING ON CAMPUS
40% PART-TIME

Jillian Klein, Vice President, Government & Regulatory Affairs Strategic Education, Inc., advocates for innovation in higher education in order to better assist institutions who offer competency-based education (CBE).

“...In a world where higher education continues to often be constructed around the perceived needs of 18-22-year-olds, competency-based education (CBE) is providing a way for the “non-traditional” students — working adults who are now the majority of college-going students — to efficiently and effectively access, and complete, postsecondary education. The success of CBE requires institutions, lawmakers, and employers to ensure that students access to the highest quality programs that serve them well.”
SNAPSHOT: How do Alaska’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how Alaska compares to the national higher education landscape, look to the data below detailing trends in enrollment, federal student aid, tuition and fees, earnings, and attainment comparing national and state level data.

**ENROLLMENT**

Alaska’s total student enrollment is **27,872**

56% Alaska students attend part-time.

**FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

About 61% of Alaska’s college students and their families take out federal student loans,¹ compared to 70% nationwide.²

¹Includes Direct Subsidized Loan, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Parent PLUS, Grad PLUS, and Perkins Loan.
²https://www.cnbc.com/2017/07/03/this-is-the-age-most-americans-pay-off-their-student-loans.html

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS), Enrollment by Student Level survey, Fall 2017 preliminary data. Includes undergraduate and graduate fall enrollment.


SNAPSHOT: How do Alaska’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Alaska’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are below the national average.

Source: College Board. Trends in College Pricing 2018. Figure 5 and 6. https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing

Note: Alaska does not have a separate community college system.

ATTAINMENT

In 2016-2017, above-average rates of Alaska students obtained associate’s degrees and certificates compared to the rest of the nation, but Alaska students obtained bachelor’s degrees below the national average.


Note: Certificates only include less than one year and at least one year but less than 4 years.
SNAPSHOT: How do Alaska’s numbers stack up?

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019, 41.8% of Alaska residents ages 25-64 have obtained a certificate or postsecondary degree.

NATIONALLY, 47.6% of Americans ages 25-64 have obtained a certificate or postsecondary degree.¹

Alaska Education Levels for Residents Ages 25-64

- High School Graduate or less: 10.3%
- Some college, no credential: 18.1%
- Certificate: 9.3%
- Associate Degree: 22.5%
- Bachelor’s Degree: 35.7%
- Graduate or Professional Degree: 4.0%


Percentage of Alaska Residents Ages 25-64 with at least an Associate’s Degree by Race

- Hispanic: 24% National Average, 33% Alaska
- White: 47% National Average, 43% Alaska
- African-American: 31% National Average, 35% Alaska
- American Indian: 25% National Average, 12% Alaska
- Asian & Pacific Islander: 63% National Average, 33% Alaska


¹http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#state/AK

Higher Education Trends At-a-Glance | Alaska | 4
SNAPSHOT: How do Alaska’s numbers stack up?

EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT

Americans who earn a postsecondary degree or credential have higher earnings potential.

Source: Georgetown University Center for Education and Workforce. Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees. https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/certificates/

Alaska workers with higher levels of postsecondary attainment have more earning power than their peers with less than a bachelor’s degree. The median earnings of Alaska residents is above the national average.


The majority of jobs nationwide in 2020 will require education beyond high school.


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National Average Earnings of U.S. Workers By Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Attainment</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>$29,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>$34,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>$42,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>$54,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median Earnings by Educational Attainment for Alaska Residents Aged 25 and Over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Attainment</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school graduate</td>
<td>$20,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>$25,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or associate’s degree</td>
<td>$34,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>$41,869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Jobs that will Require Postsecondary Education by 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Requirement</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Alaska</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>66%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**WHAT CHALLENGES DO TODAY’S STUDENTS FACE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFORDABILITY</th>
<th>PART-TIME VS.</th>
<th>COMPLETION</th>
<th>WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT</td>
<td>40% PART-TIME</td>
<td>38% OF STUDENTS with additional financial, work, and family obligations leave school in their first year</td>
<td>64% WORK WHILE IN COLLEGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31% AT OR BELOW FEDERAL POVERTY LINE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARENTING**

24%

**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% 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](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](https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics)