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

IN CONNECTICUT,
Elsa Núñez, President of Eastern Connecticut State University, advocates for innovation in postsecondary education, but stresses quality is equally important.

“...Innovations such as competency-based education and industry partnerships are examples of how institutions have addressed the changing student demographics and workforce demands. However, the quality of innovative education, just like that of conventional higher education programs, must be carefully assessed in order to be truly valued by all pertinent stakeholders.”
SNAPSHOT: How do Connecticut’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how Connecticut 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

Connecticut’s total student enrollment is

205,947

66%

Connecticut students attend full-time.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID

About

63%

of Connecticut’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 Connecticut’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Connecticut’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are above the national average.

Source: College Board. Trends in College Pricing 2018. Figure 5 and 6. https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing
Source: College Board. Average Tuition and Fees and Room and Board in Current Dollars, 2017-18 and 2018-19.

ATTAINMENT

In 2016-2017, above-average rates of Connecticut students obtained bachelor’s degrees and certificates compared to the rest of the nation.

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

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019, 54.1% of Connecticut 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

Connecticut Education Levels for Residents Ages 25-64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate or less</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no credential</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


¹http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#state/CT
SNAPSHOT: How do Connecticut’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/

Connecticut 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 Connecticut residents is above the national average.


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

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.4

VETERAN-STATUS 4% OF UNDERGRADS ARE VETERANS

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.

4 https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Completion%20Grants%20release%208_16_17%20FINAL.pdf
5 https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics