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.

IN WASHINGTON...
Jan Yoshiwara, Executive Director of the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges and member of Higher Learning Advocates’ Champions Network, oversees state education policy and strategic planning for the community and technical college system and works with higher education stakeholders to advance goals and policies.

Higher education is about more than just getting job skills and a credential to help launch or advance your career, as critical as those things are. Education has the opportunity to develop and uplift the human potential of all, and we see that society as a whole benefits when opportunity expands.

JAN YOSHIWARA’S POLICY POWER PLAYS:
• Increase access to higher education for low-income families through new financial aid and student loan pathways.
• Work with employers to develop alternate revenue streams to offset higher education costs for students.
• Provide people with the opportunity to get good jobs regardless of financial or educational circumstance.

NATIONWIDE, TODAY’S STUDENTS ARE:

37% OLDER THAN 25
64% WORKING WHILE IN COLLEGE
24% PARENTING
13% LIVING ON CAMPUS
40% PART-TIME
SNAPSHOT: How do Washington’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how Washington 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

Washington’s total student enrollment is 370,908.

69% Washington students attend full-time.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID

About 57% of Washington’s college students and their families take out federal student loans,¹ compared to 70% nationwide.²

Washington’s Fall Student Enrollment, 2017

- Full-time: 69.1%
- Part-time: 30.9%

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

Washington Federal Student Aid Portfolio

- Direct Loan Subsidized: 2.3%
- Direct Loan Unsubsidized Undergraduate: 2.5%
- Direct Loan Unsubsidized Graduate: 9.1%
- Parent PLUS: 22.5%
- Grad PLUS: 31.2%
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG): 2.2%
- Federal Work Study: 4.5%
- Perkins Loan: 1.9%


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
SNAPSHOT: How do Washington’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Washington’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are slightly higher than the national average for students attending public two-year institutions and for out-of-state students attending public four-year institutions.

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


ATTAINMENT

In 2016-2017, Washington students obtained associate’s degrees and certificates above the national average.


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

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019,

55%

of Washington 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.3

Washington Education Levels for Residents Ages 25-64


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


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

Washington 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 Washington 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?

**AFFORDABILITY**
- 49% FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT
- 31% AT OR BELOW FEDERAL POVERTY LINE

**PART-TIME VS.**
- 40% PART-TIME

**COMPLETION**
- 38% OF STUDENTS with additional financial, work, and family obligations leave school in their first year

**WORK**
- 64% WORK WHILE IN COLLEGE

**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.

**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.

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5 [https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics](https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics)