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 TEXAS...
Dr. Michael Sorrell, President of Paul Quinn College and Higher Learning Advocates’ Champions Network member, advocates for creating a revolutionary new model for urban, career-based learning.

“We know that, statistically speaking, the group of students we aim for, those from the lowest economic strata, have always been the most difficult to retain and graduate. Many of them grow up in environments that do not prepare them for college. Or they have to drop out because their parents lose a job, and there’s no money to pay bills or pay back loans. The students have to go back to their homes, go to work full-time, or take care of their younger brothers and sisters.”
SNAPSHOT: How do Texas’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how Texas 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**

Texas’s total student enrollment is **1,655,949**

53% Texas students attend full-time.

**FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

About **57%** of Texas’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 Texas’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Texas’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are relatively on par with the national average.

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

ATTAINMENT

In 2016-2017, above-average rates of Texas students obtained associate’s degrees and certificates compared to the rest of the nation, but Texas 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 Texas’s numbers stack up?

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019, 43% of Texas 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


Texas Education Levels for Residents Ages 25-64

- 40.1% Bachelor’s Degree
- 20.1% Associate Degree
- 16.8% Certificate
- 10.1% Some college, no credential
- 7.8% High School Graduate or less
- 5.0% Graduate or Professional Degree

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

- Hispanic: National Average 24%, Texas 21%
- White: National Average 47%, Texas 48%
- African-American: National Average 31%, Texas 33%
- American Indian: National Average 25%, Texas 34%
- Asian & Pacific Islander: National Average 63%, Texas 67%


³http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#state/TX
SNAPSHOT: How do Texas’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/

Texas 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 Texas residents is above the national average for residents with some college or a postsecondary degree.


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

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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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