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

Giselle Gonzalez wanted to obtain a college degree to ensure she gets a job that leads to a secure and happy life. She was accepted as part of Maryland’s CollegeTracks program, which helped her complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), apply for grants, and prepare for a scholarship interview.

“It’s really hard to have stability if you haven’t gone to college. If I want to be able to live on my own and not struggle to pay for things, it would be better to further my education. It’s hard to pay for all the books and such. That’s why I am working the two jobs, to try to help my parents out now that my sister’s also going to college. For us, it’s a little bit of a struggle, but we’re making it through.”

To learn more about Giselle’s story, visit todaysstudents.higherlearningadvocates.org.
SNAPSHOT: How do Hawaii’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how Hawaii 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**

Hawaii’s total student enrollment is **64,436**

58% Hawaii students attend full-time.

**FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

About **56%** of Hawaii’s college students and their families take out federal student loans,¹ compared to **70%** nationwide.²

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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

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SNAPSHOT: How do Hawaii’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Hawaii’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 Hawaii students obtained associate’s degrees 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 Hawaii’s numbers stack up?

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019,

**46.9%**

of Hawaii 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

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**Hawaii 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>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no credential</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Hawaii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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SNAPSHOT: How do Hawaii’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/

Hawaii 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 Hawaii residents is below the national average for bachelor’s degree recipients.


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

**AFFORDABILITY**
- 49% financially independent
- 31% at or below federal poverty line

**PART-TIME VS. COMPLETION**
- 40% part-time
- 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

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