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 NORTH CAROLINA,

Margaret Spellings, former President of the University of North Carolina system, former Secretary of Education, and former board member of Higher Learning Advocates, is a national leader in issues relating to college affordability, accessibility, student success, and economic impact.

Regardless of the scale — at an institution, a state, or a nation — the same principles that underpin good management apply. People want to know what’s expected of them, and what the consequences will be if they meet their goals or don’t. Done well, accountability is a show of respect for the professionalism and capacity of the people who work for you. We can take that same principle and apply it nationally. It’s on all of us to ensure that we do so in the new year and not squander the opportunity that HEA reauthorization affords us.

"
SNAPSHOT: How do North Carolina’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how North Carolina 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**

North Carolina’s total student enrollment is **569,859**

64% North Carolina students attend full-time.

**FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

North Carolina Federal Student Aid Portfolio

- Direct Loan Subsidized: 4.7%
- Direct Loan Unsubsidized Graduate: 2.8%
- Direct Loan Unsubsidized Undergraduate: 1.0%
- Parent PLUS: 23.4%
- Grad PLUS: 33.2%
- Pell Grant: 4.6%
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG): 4.9%
- Federal Work Study: 23.8%
- Perkins Loan: 1.6%


**FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

About 59% of North Carolina’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
SNAPSHOT: How do North Carolina’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES
North Carolina’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are lower than 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 Fees and Room and Board in Current Dollars, 2017-18 and 2018-19.

ATTAINMENT
In 2016-2017, North Carolina students obtained associate’s degrees relatively on par with 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 North Carolina’s numbers stack up?

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019, 49% of North Carolina 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

North Carolina 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>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no credential</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>North Carolina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>47% 48%</td>
<td>63% 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>31% 31%</td>
<td>25% 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#state/NC
SNAPSHOT: How do North Carolina’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/

North Carolina 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 North Carolina residents is below 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. FULL-TIME</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