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 CALIFORNIA...

Michele Siqueiros, President of the Campaign for College Opportunity and member of Higher Learning Advocates’ Champions Network, is a leading voice for affordability, access, success and equity in higher education.

College and university faculty should see their students as successful, and in doing so, work to ensure those students are given every opportunity to earn their degrees. To do this, they must collect data, set goals that ensure students get to and through their campus in a timely manner, and be transparent with their students about the options available to them for financial aid, for course placement, for transfer pathways, and for any additional support offered to students.

MICHELE SIQUEIROS’ POLICY POWER PLAYS:

- Make today’s students the center of policy decisions.
- Change the focus of policy from ensuring students are college-ready to also ensuring institutions are student-ready.
- Create a path forward for undocumented and DACAmented students within higher education.
SNAPSHOT: How do California’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how California 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

California’s total student enrollment is 2,758,247

56%

California students attend full-time.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID

About 47% of California’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 California’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

California’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are below the national average at public two-year institutions and for in-state students attending public four-year institutions.

ATTAINMENT

In 2016-2017, below-average rates of California students obtained bachelor’s degrees compared to the rest of the nation.
SNAPSHOT: How do California’s numbers stack up?

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019,

49.1%

of California 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

California 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>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no credential</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>California</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SNAPSHOT: How do California’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/

California 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 California residents is above the national average for high school graduates and residents with postsecondary degrees.


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.

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