



Top Ten Takeaways about Undergraduates

Of greatest concern . . .

1 College attainment rates are troublingly unequal: Among twenty-five- to twenty-nine-year-olds, in 2015, 50 percent of women had a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 41 percent of men. Similarly, 72 percent of Asian students earned an associate degree or higher compared with 54 percent of white, 31 percent of black, and 27 percent of Hispanic students. In a related study, only 36 percent of students from low-income families earned a bachelor's degree compared with 54 percent of students from high-income families.

2 Many college students are academically unprepared for college: One-half of all college students take remedial courses.

3 More students are borrowing more: The proportion of college graduates who took out federal loans increased from about 50 to 60 percent from 2000 to 2012; the median cumulative loan amount increased nearly 25 percent from about \$16,500 to \$20,400.

4 Students who do not graduate are most likely to default: Students who do not graduate and who take out the smallest loan amounts have the highest default rates.

5 Too few students graduate and too few graduate on time: Only about 60 percent of students earn a bachelor's degree, taking, on average, almost six years to complete their studies. Only 29 percent of students who start a certificate or associate degree at a two-year college earn a credential within three years.

And to be clear . . .

6 The vast majority of students go to college: More than 85 percent of students who graduated from high school enrolled in college within eight years.

7 Most students get in: More than 70 percent of undergraduates attend colleges that accept over 50 percent of their applicants, while only 1 percent of students attend colleges that accept less than 10 percent of applicants.

8 Students overwhelmingly go public: Choosing among over 4,700 different higher education institutions, almost 80 percent of fall undergraduates are enrolled in public colleges and universities.

9 Adults and part-timers matter: Students over the age of twenty-five make up 31 percent of the undergraduate population and students who study part time make up 37 percent; an additional 20 percent of American adults have earned some college credit but no degree.

10 It's not just about the baccalaureate: Of recently awarded undergraduate credentials, less than half (48 percent) were bachelor's degrees, while 26 percent were associate degrees and 25 percent were certificates.