



Growing Pressures on Vulnerable Students and Institutions

An Inside Higher Ed webcast
Wednesday, September 30, 2020
2 p.m. Eastern

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A Widening Gap

- Higher education is increasingly a tale of haves and have-nots – for students and colleges and universities alike.
- COVID-19 and the recession it spurred threaten to widen a gap that was already growing before the pandemic.
- Despite those headwinds, there is significant pressure on colleges to be more equitable, and many efforts under way to improve attainment for traditionally underrepresented students.

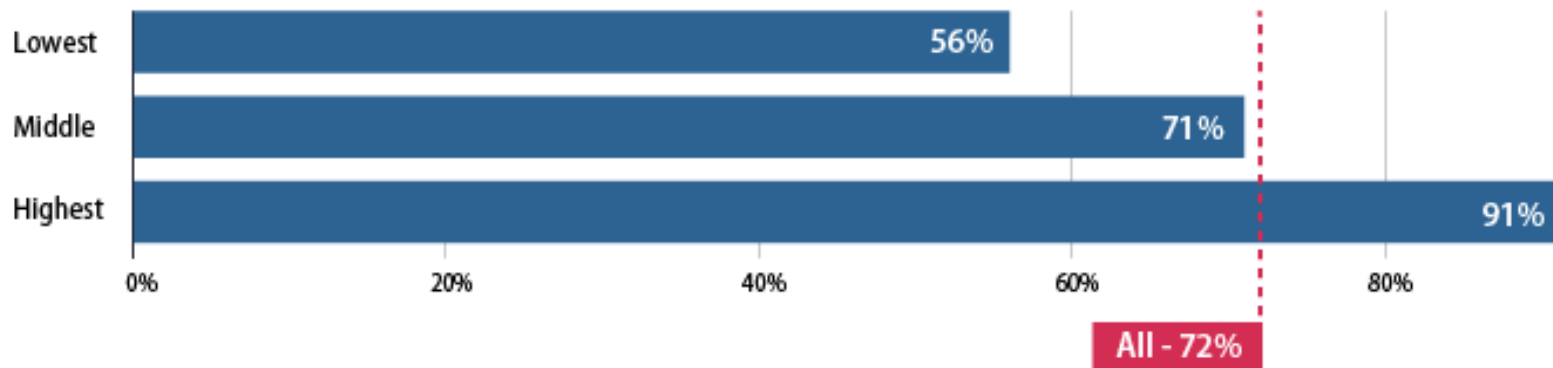


Pre-COVID: Student Access and Success

FIGURE 1

Low-socioeconomic status (SES) students enroll in college at a rate that's 60 percent the level of their high-SES peers

Percentage of 2009 ninth-graders that ever enrolled in any college by February 2016, by SES quintile



Note: The middle category includes the middle three SES quintiles. The National Center for Education Statistics developed SES—a composite measure that includes measures of income as well as parental education and occupation.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), table cgbkdhc6, available at <https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/powerstats/percentdistribution.aspx>.



Pre-COVID: Student Access and Success (cont.)

TABLE 1

College enrollment of Black and white students has fallen, while rising for Latinx students

12-month unduplicated undergraduate enrollment in public colleges, in millions of students, 2014-15 and 2018-19 academic years

	Total	Black	Hispanic	White
2018-19	17.42	2.08	3.77	8.46
2014-15	17.84	2.29	3.26	9.27
Change	-0.43	-0.20	0.51	-0.81
Percentage change	-2.38%	-8.90%	15.53%	-8.74%

Source: Author's analysis of 2014-15 and 2018-19 12-month unduplicated enrollment data from National Center for Education Statistics, "IPEDS Postsecondary Education Data System," available at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/> (last accessed September 2020).



Center for American Progress, Sept. 2020

Pre-COVID: Student Access and Success (cont.)

- Of first-time enrollees in 2011, 22.7% of Black and 23.6% of Hispanic students earned bachelor's within 6 years, compared to 55.3% of Asian and 43.4% of white students.
- 2/3 of dependent students from families earning >\$90,000 earned a bachelor's degree within 6 years, compared to 1/3 of those from families earning from >\$30,000 to <\$60,000 (34.9%) and a quarter (25.6%) of those earning <\$30,000.
- Students first in families to go to college half as likely as peers who were not (18.6 vs. 41.6%) to earn degree within 6 years, and more likely to leave college without a credential (43.4 vs. 28.7%).
- Veterans half as likely (15.9% versus 37.2%) to have earned a bachelor's degree as nonveterans.

Pre-COVID: Colleges and Universities



- Enormous differences by wealth: ~100 universities with largest endowments (13%) hold 3/4^{ths} of the total wealth.
- Widely varying predictions of financial peril. Most optimistic 1 in 10; up to half? Moody's says 20-25% of college have troubling traits.
- Colleges that cater mostly to non-white students more vulnerable. African-Americans more than twice as likely as white and Hispanic students to attend an institution at risk.

Impact of COVID: Students

As colleges closed campuses and pivoted suddenly to remote learning, underrepresented students were disproportionately affected by:

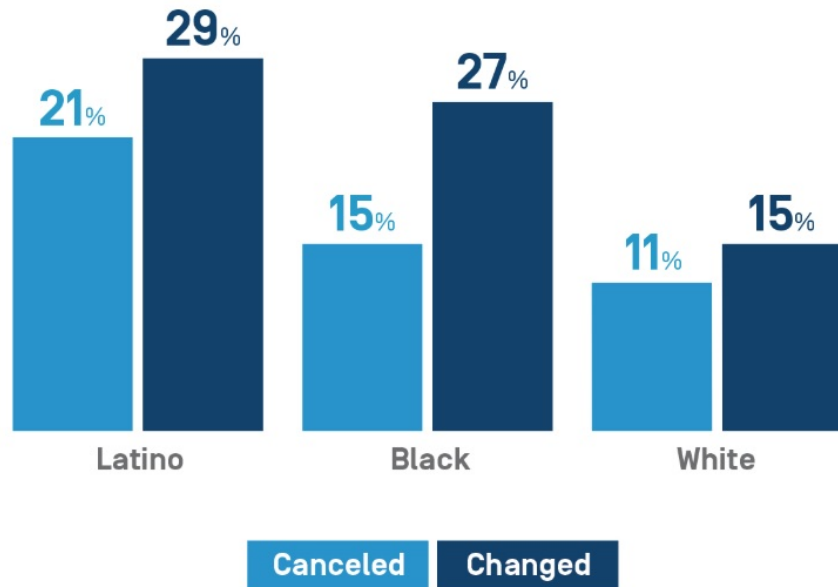
- Lack of access to technology, wireless, quiet/safe places to live and study
- Additional burdens of child/family care
- Loss of campus jobs/need to take on more work



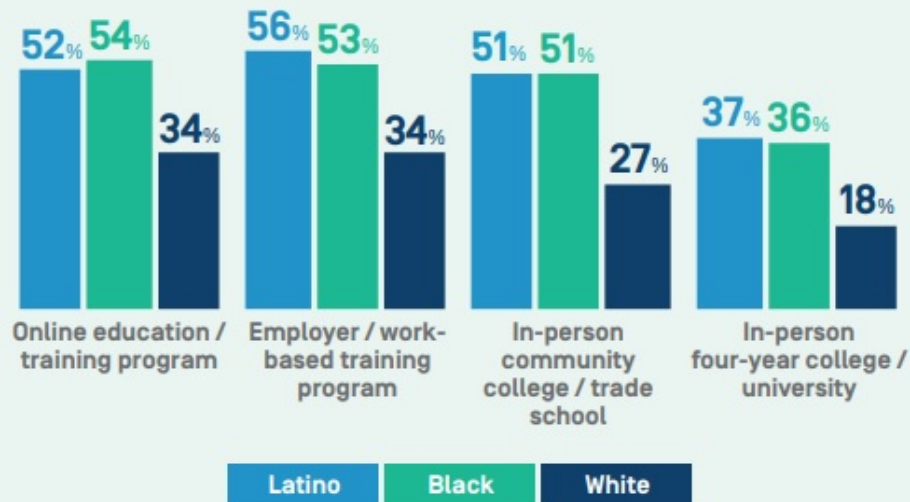
KCTCS

Impact of COVID: Students (cont.)

Black Americans and Latinos are more likely than white Americans to have changed or canceled their education plans.



FUTURE EDUCATION PLANS
Black Americans and Latinos are more likely than white Americans to enroll in education and training programs in the coming months across learning providers.



Strada Education Network

Impact of COVID: Students (cont.)

Watching enrollment closely

- **Spring figures** showed enrollments stable, but more “leaves of absence” among minority students.
- **Summer figures** showed small drop in undergrad enrollment offset by growth in grad students – but 5% drop in associate degree programs and 11.7% in certificates. Black undergrad enrollment down 8.3%. Latino enrollment up.
- **All eyes on fall:** undergrad enrollment down 2.5% over all, 7.5% at community colleges, -3.8% at private nonprofit, only -0.4% at public four-year. Black and white enrollment fell by 6+%, others half that.



Impact of COVID: Institutions

- Every college has seen hit in most revenue streams (tuition, housing, etc.)
- Some colleges better suited to withstand COVID impact – small number of wealthy colleges cutting tuition, most not.
- Enrollment figures from previous slide – community colleges disproportionately hit. Not seeing historical countercyclical increase as economy tanks?
- Possible countertrend at historically black institutions (linked to Black Lives Matter?)

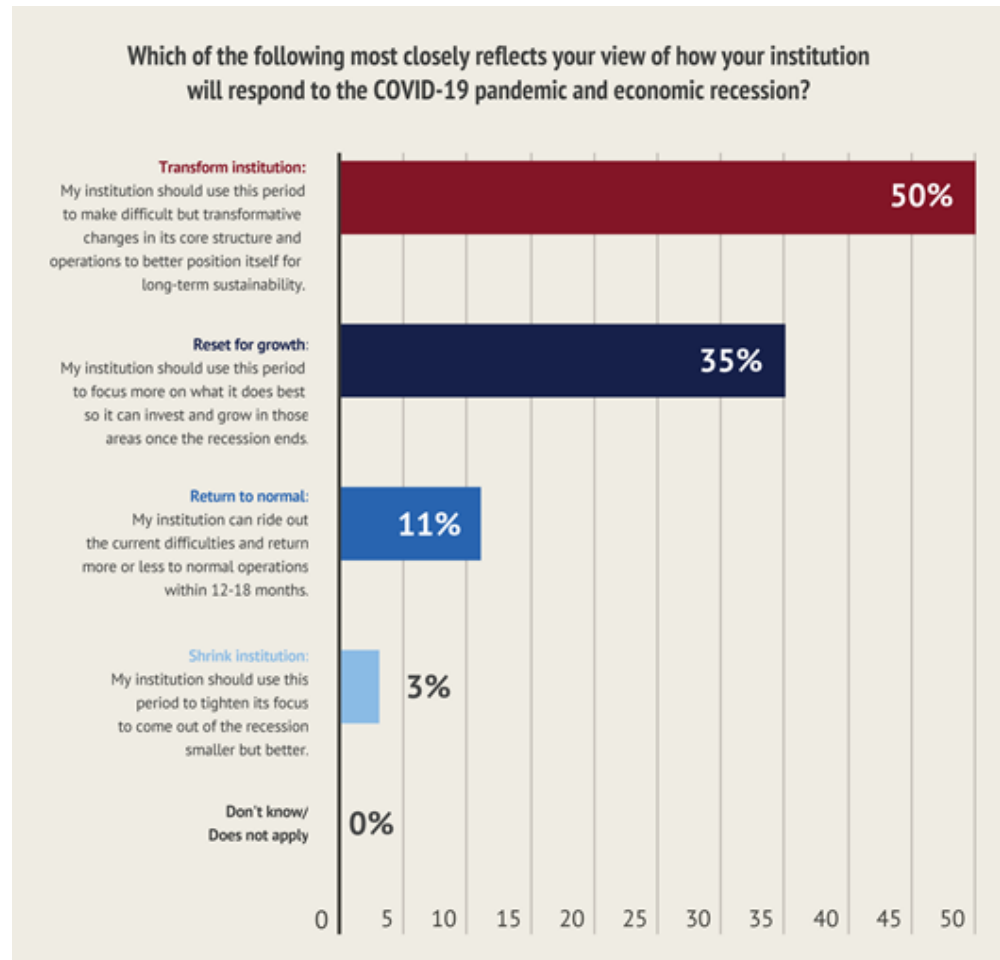
Now and Forward: Students

- How long will COVID-19 effects last?
- Enrollment: demographic cliff ahead, but bad economy usually leads to enrollment upturn.
- Colleges focusing as never before on “student success,” especially for underrepresented students.
- Impact of Black Lives Matter movement – growing pressure on colleges (especially selective ones) to enroll and graduate students of color.
- Political landscape: Debt-free college? Loan forgiveness? Attacks on consideration of race in admissions?

Now and Forward: Colleges and Universities

- What will be the lasting impacts of COVID-19? (focus on students as people, more remote work?)
- Increasing financial pressures (and compulsion to “transform”)
- Likely decline in number of traditional-age students; more focus on retaining existing students

Now and Forward: Colleges and Universities (cont.)



Now and Forward: Colleges and Universities (cont.)

What might that mean?

- More online/hybrid learning (permanently)
- Smaller campus footprint
- More cross-institutional collaboration (all the way up to consolidation/merger)
- Rethinking of faculty role

With Thanks ...

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