

INSIDE
HIGHER ED



Careers in a Changing Era: How Higher Ed Can Fight the Skills Gap and Prepare Students for a Dynamic World of Work

An Inside Higher Ed webcast

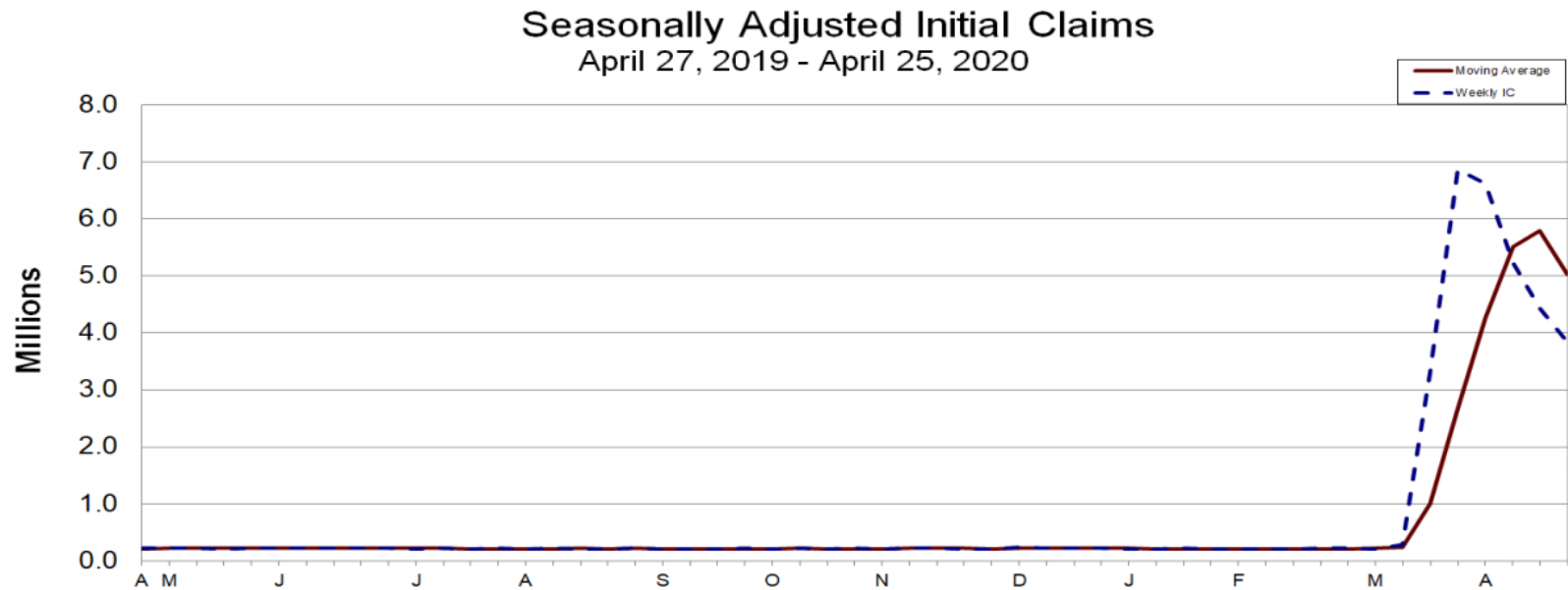
Tuesday, May 5, 2020

2 p.m. Eastern

Presenters

- Rick Seltzer, projects editor at *Inside Higher Ed*, rick.seltzer@insidehighered.com
- Mikhail Zinshteyn, reporter at *CalMatters* and report author, mikhail@calmatters.org

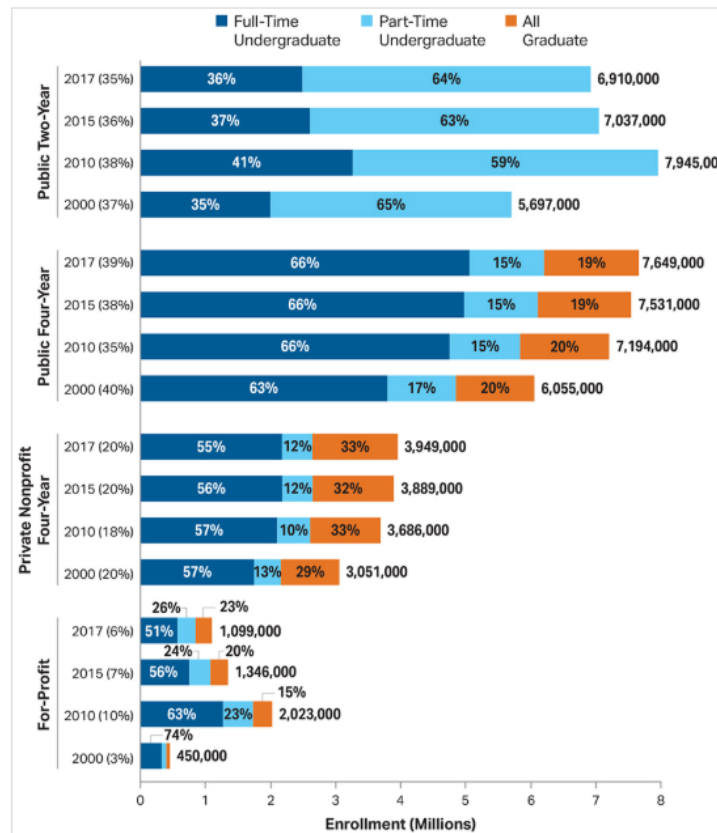
The Current Economic Crisis



— U.S. Department of Labor

Another Surge?

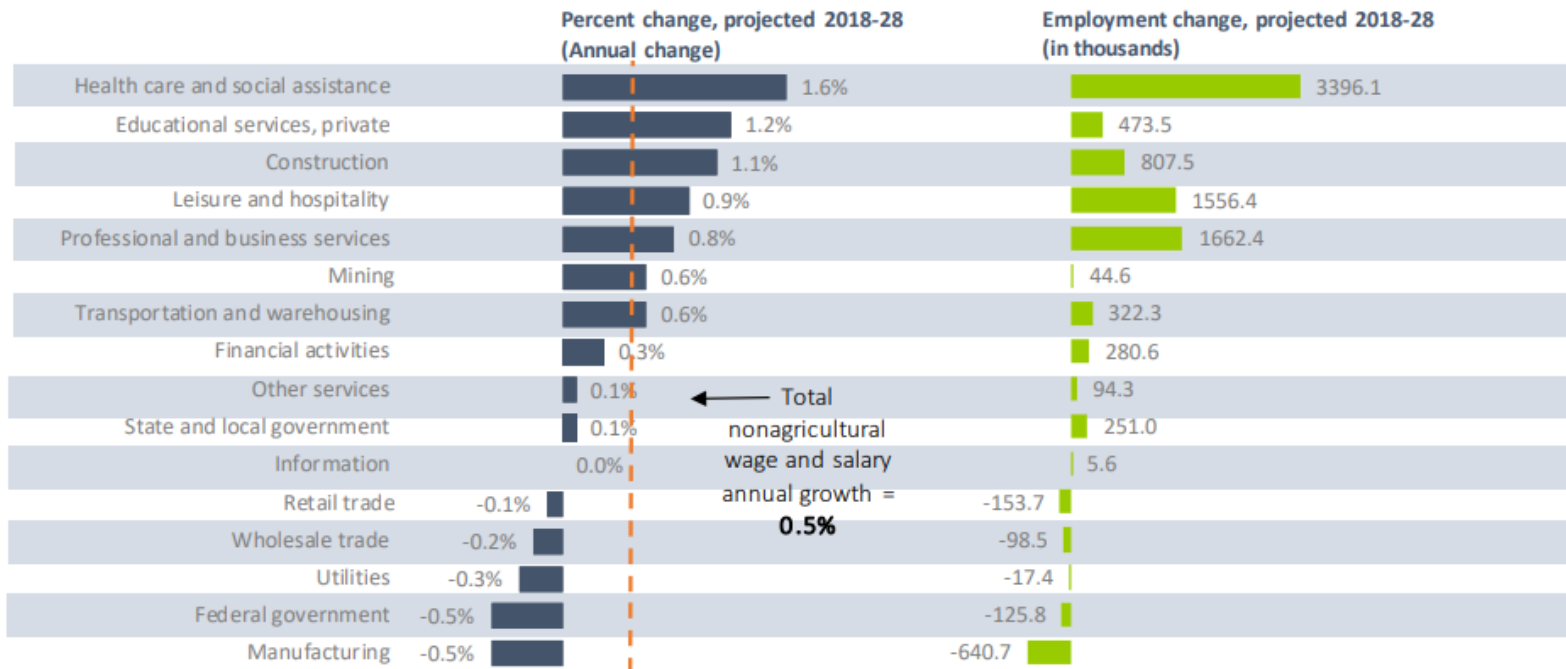
Postsecondary Fall Enrollment by Attendance Status and Level of Enrollment (with Percentage of All Students Enrolled in Each Sector), 2000 to 2017, Selected Years



— College Board, data from NCES and IPEDS

Job Growth by Industry

Percent change and numeric growth by industry sector, projected 2018-28

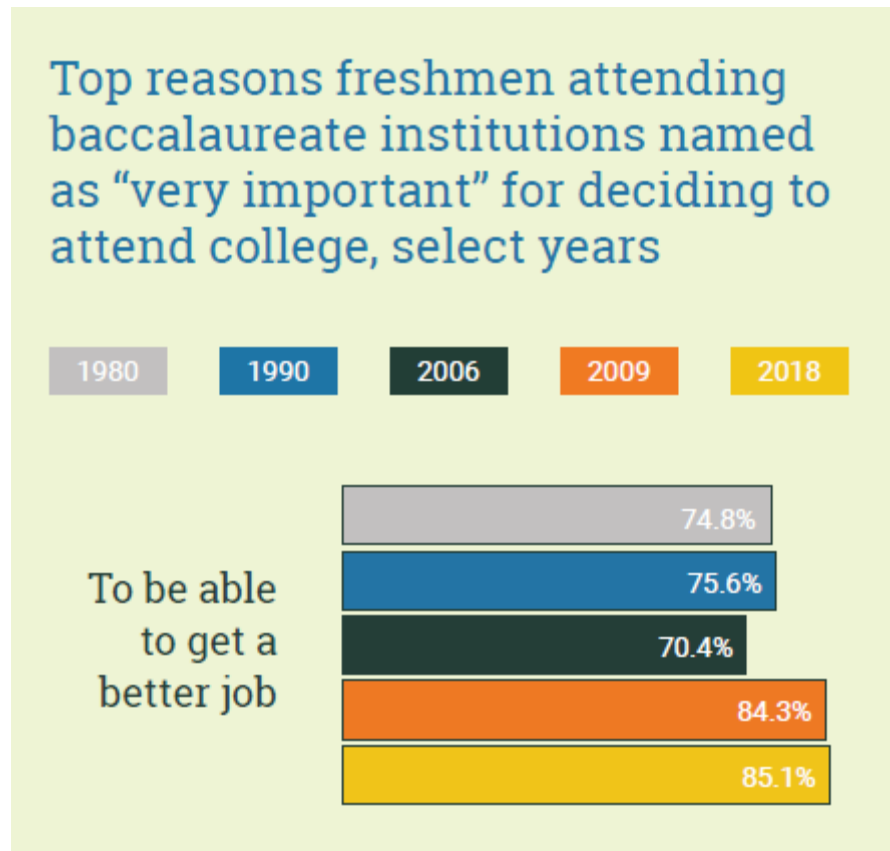


— U.S. Department of Labor

Why Care About the Skills Gap?

- 85 percent of incoming freshmen say getting a better job is a very important reason to attend college.
 - Higher Education Research Institute surveys
- The share of students citing finding a better job is rising.

Students Care



— Higher Education Research Institute surveys

Employers Have Doubts About Graduates

Perception of Proficiency in Career Readiness Competencies, Employers and Students

COMPETENCY	% OF EMPLOYERS THAT RATED RECENT GRADS PROFICIENT*	% OF STUDENTS WHO CONSIDERED THEMSELVES PROFICIENT**
Professionalism/Work Ethic	42.5%	89.4%
Oral/Written Communications	41.6%	79.4%
Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	55.8%	79.9%
Teamwork/Collaboration	77.0%	85.1%
Leadership	33.0%	70.5%
Digital Technology	65.8%	59.9%
Career Management	17.3%	40.9%
Global/Intercultural Fluency	20.7%	34.9%

Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers

Employers See One

- 46 percent of employers in the U.S. said they couldn't find the skills they need in 2018.
- 67 percent of firms with more than 250 employees reported talent shortages.
 - ManpowerGroup survey

But it's Complicated

- 19 percent of employers said they struggled to fill jobs because applicants lack hard skills.
- 29 percent said not enough candidates applied for openings.
- 20 percent cited lack of experience.
 - ManpowerGroup survey



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Very Complicated

“There are many different gaps, because there are many different skills.”

—Matt Sigelman, CEO of Burning Glass Technologies

Perception isn't Always Reality

“The problem with the skills gap is that it’s never defined. Usually it just means that employers aren’t getting what they want at the wages they want to pay. That’s life, it’s not a policy issue.”

—Peter Cappelli, professor of management, Penn Wharton School

But You Can Still Adapt

“I think higher education is reacting to this perception. Some of this work focuses on institutionwide approaches to implementing competency-based initiatives both in curricular and co-curricular experiences.”

—Matthew Brink, assistant executive director at NACE

How Do Students Feel?

- 1/3 of undergraduates strongly agree they will graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the job market.
- 37 percent somewhat agree.

— Gallup and Strada Education Network
2019 Survey



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Gallup's Big Six

1. I had at least one professor at [college] who made me excited about learning.
2. My professor(s) at [college] cared about me as a person.
3. I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.
4. I worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete.
5. I had an internship or job that allowed me to apply what I was learning in the classroom.
6. I was extremely active in extracurricular activities and organizations while I attended [college].



Key Takeaways on the Skills Gap

- Top reasons students give for attending college are to find a good job and to earn more money.
- Careerism isn't students' sole motivation. Another of their top reasons for attending college is to learn more about the topics that interest them.
- Be wary of the skills-gap narrative. Not every labor shortage is the fault of colleges. Industries have changed, and some jobs are just not as appealing to workers.
- Some still say colleges are not equipping students with the full suite of skills employers want. Others say employers are bad at knowing what they want.



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Key Takeaways on the Economy

- During economic down times, employers request more years of experience, and a higher share of employers request employees with college degrees. Skills requirements drop during economic recoveries.
- The economy requires more college-educated workers, but most jobs are still expected to require only a high school diploma for the next decade.
- Apprenticeships are a valuable investment for companies and the public but only a tiny fraction of the education and training pipeline. Higher ed is a much larger generator of future talent.



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Strategic Considerations

- Some experts want colleges to require students to engage in applied work experience or long-term research projects.
- Mandatory internships draw criticisms, including that they're unfair to employers.
- Create a consortium of colleges to advocate for common strategies and learn about best practices.
- One school of thought is that “students don't do optional.” Plan supplemental instruction requirements accordingly.

Specific Strategies

- Some institutions have overhauled their entire catalogs to show not just major requirements but also clear examples of how majors prepare students for certain jobs. They list workforce competencies students will learn.
- Emphasizing career exploration early helps prevent students from learning late that certain majors aren't the pathways to the careers they expected.
- Some institutions won't let their students register for classes until they've completed a career assessment and have seen an adviser.

More Specific Strategies

- Co-op and internship opportunities signal institutions are serious about workforce readiness and are a powerful tool in underscoring what students learned in the classroom.
- Some private colleges are introducing mini terms to develop soft and hard workforce skills, such as résumé writing, the art of the handshake and popular software used in corporate offices.
- Consider developing career fairs that encourage employers to teach students something new.
- Make mandatory learning experiences such as traveling research opportunities, volunteer work, film editing or short-term jobs tied to students' studies.
- Career advisers should see students early and help them craft personal stories that resonate with employers.

STEM Matters, but so does the Liberal Arts

“The jobs of the future will demand the higher-order cognitive abilities and skills that are often associated with a liberal arts education.”

—Joseph Aoun, president, Northeastern University

Q&A

- Your questions
- Your ideas for future coverage?