

Building A Crystal Stair: Equity On The Road to 2030

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Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.

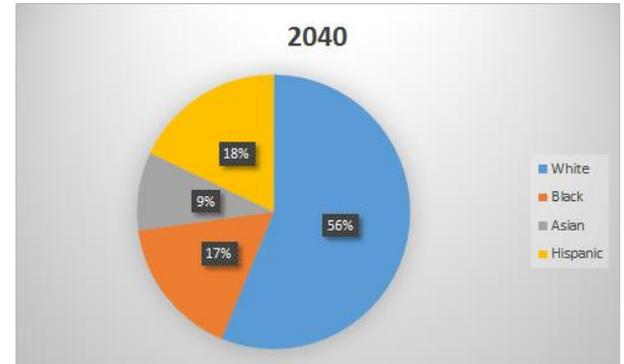
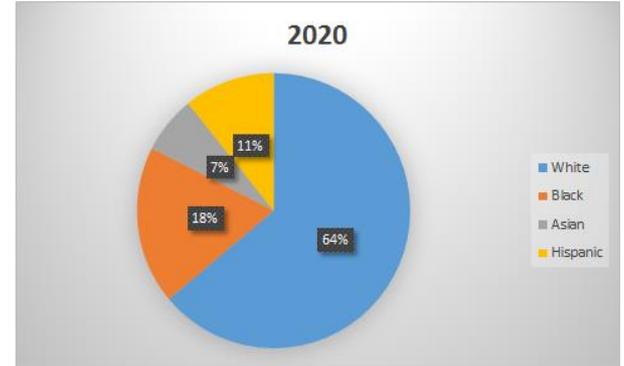
- “Mother to Son”, Langston Hughes



We cannot reach the **2025/2030** goal without building a crystal stair for Underrepresented Minorities (URMs): poor, rural, African American, Hispanic, and working class students.

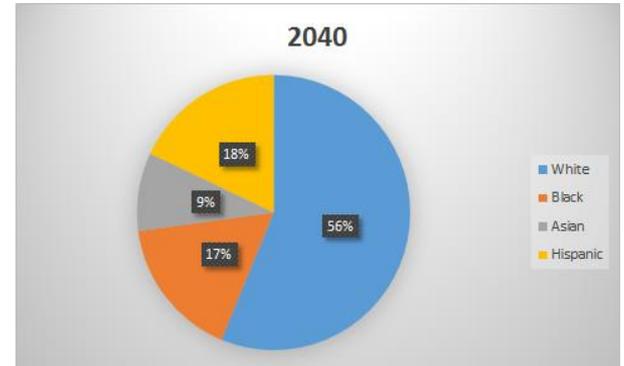
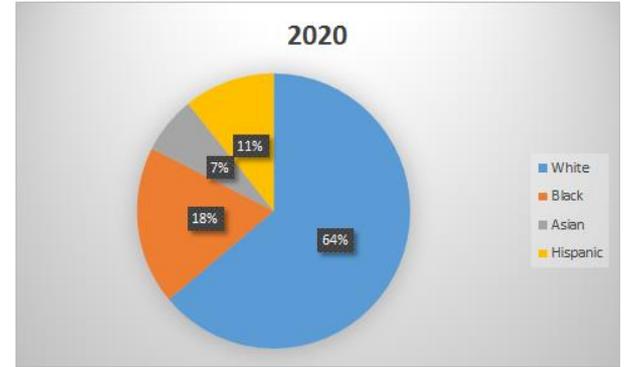
Period.

Virginia, Population Projections, By Race, 2020-2040



Challenge: How
Do We Increase
High-Quality
Access For
URMs?

Virginia, Population Projections, By Race, 2020- 2040



Good News

URMs have strong preferences for credentials with clear occupational outcomes **and** URM students work harder when they believe their credentials are tightly linked to careers



How Students Choose

Perceptions of the availability of financial aid not only positively influence thoughts of matriculation, but they also predispose students to select a particular institution”

(Choy & Ottinger, 1998; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Jackson, 1978; Olson & Rosenfeld, 1984; King, 1996; St. John, 1994a, 1994b; St. John et al., 1996)

Bad News

Students perceive for-profit colleges as more occupationally-focused and these institutions disproportionately enroll URMs at high student and public cost.

Challenging News For Virginia

Students of Color are more likely than majority students to borrow 68% (10,884) compared to 60% (21,950), and they borrow a bit more \$28,000 compared to \$26,754 at the medians.

The **largest percentage of borrowers is women of color**, 71% (6,700) of which borrow \$28,641 at the median, which is higher than all other groups.

(“The Graduate Debt Report, SCHEV, 2016)

Challenging News for U.S.

High borrowing + Labor Market Discrimination
Means Some URMs Will Swirl More =

Managing Credential Costs Is An Educational
Justice Issue

What Does The Higher Education
Crystal Stair Look Like?

Translate Mobility

- + **Translate** Career Clusters
- + **Decrease** bureaucratic options
- + **De-stigmatize** “swirling”

Invest in Institutions

- + Community Colleges
- + HBCUs
- + Technological Efficiencies

Take-Aways?

- + Emphasize **Quality** To Narrow Disparities That Jeopardize 2030 Goal
- + Translate the jobs and mobility for students
- + Assessments tuned to group differences

Why Me?

A sociologist studying technological change in how we go to school for work.

Higher education

Work

Technology

Intersecting Inequalities

Emerging Inequalities

#LowerEd

#DigitalSociologies