

## Access, Enrollment and Completion

### Access and Enrollment

Virginia faces a future in which higher education will play an increasingly important role. Virginians will need deeper and broader knowledge and skills to be engaged, productive participants in our evolving Commonwealth and its economy. At the same time, the demographics of the emerging generation are changing, as an increasing share of our youth will come from populations that historically are underrepresented in both higher education and the highly educated sectors of our workforce.

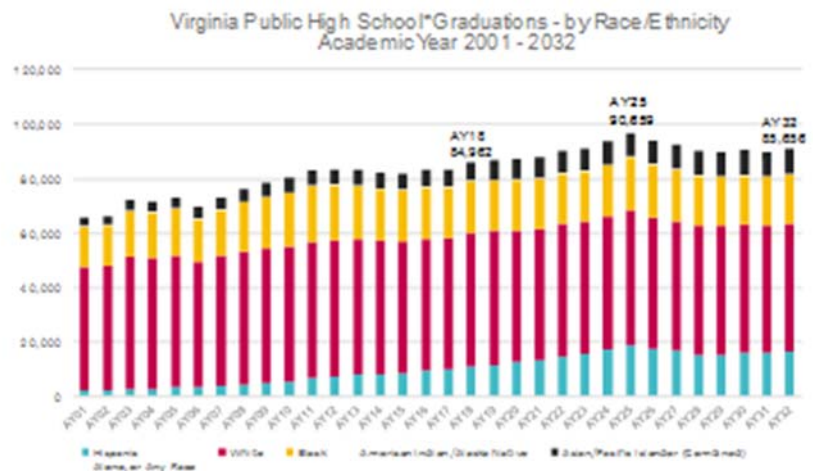
### Why is this important?

**Shifting demographics** - While the state's high school graduates are expected to increase to a high-watermark of 90,659 in 2025, subsequent cohorts will decline, limiting the state's traditional undergraduate population. Virginia's high school graduation population demographic is shifting, driven in part by substantial increases in the state's Hispanic population.

**Leaks in the pipeline** - Each year ~25,000 Virginia high school graduates do not enroll in college within 18 months. An additional ~5,400 were lost during their high school years. The participation rate of Hispanic and African-American and low-income students is lower than among Asian, White and middle- to high-income students. Virginia is not doing a good enough job of attracting students from underrepresented populations into postsecondary education in numbers sufficient to provide for future workforce needs.

### Re-engaging some college but no degree

- There are about 650,000 Virginians ages 18-30 who do not have at least an associate degree and who are not enrolled in college. Greater percentages of these adults are nonwhite, male, have children, are considered low income and receive SNAP/Food Stamps than what is found among their peers.



Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

## Completion

Virginia's goal is to be the best educated state by 2030 with an attainment rate of 70.5% (an additional 1.5 million degrees/credentials). Based on 2017 data, attainment is at 53.9%, which ranked sixth nationally. To measure progress, Virginia is also committed to closing the success gap for underrepresented students. For Virginia to continue to produce the awards needed to be the best-educated state, a focus area must be to close the gaps in educational attainment.

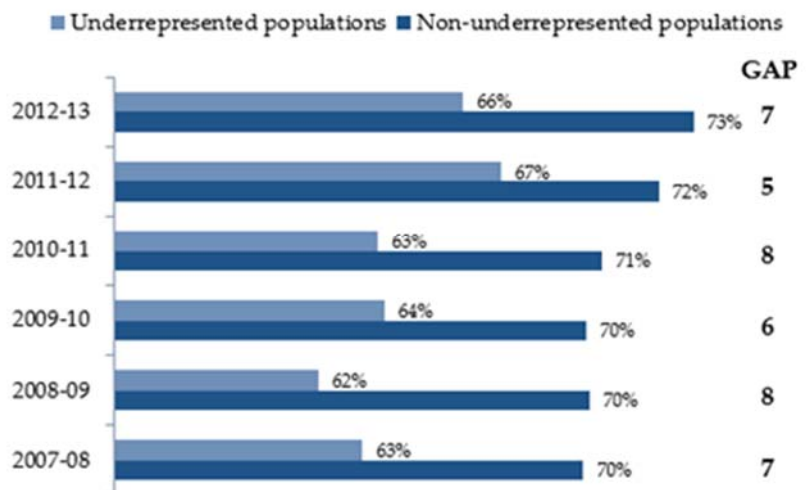
### Why is this important?

**Adults with some college but no degree (dropouts)** - There are about 650,000 Virginians aged 18-30 who do not have at least an associate degree and who are not enrolled in college. These represent individuals who dropped out of college.

### Significant gaps in success for underrepresented students –

Low-income, students of color, and rural students continue to complete at a lower rate than other students. While completion rates increased at four-year institutions, underrepresented students (those who are low-income, minority race/ethnicity, over age 25 and from regions of the state with low attainment rates) complete at an average rate that is seven percentage points lower than other students at public four- and two-year institutions.

Success Index at Four-Year Public Institutions



Source: [http://research.schev.edu/gradrates/success\\_index.asp](http://research.schev.edu/gradrates/success_index.asp)

**Degree Production and Potential Shortages in Associates and Certificate-** In 2017-18, Virginia's public and private nonprofit institutions issued a total of 89,529 undergraduate degrees, certificates and workforce credentials. Recent analysis completed as part of the strategic finance plan indicate that while production of bachelor's degrees appear to be on track, Virginia could face shortages in associate degree and certificate production to meet the 70% attainment goal by 2030.

## Ideas for how we can improve

### Access and enrollment

- **Develop and enhance early college credits (in progress):** Virginia has improved transfer of dual enrollment / AP / IB to ensure transfer of credits is seamless across institutions through policy. However, concerns remain regarding dual enrollment costs. Texas created a statewide taskforce to review dual enrollment practices and outcomes.
- **Improve transfer (in progress):** The Transfer Virginia initiative is a three-year partnership between SCHEV, the VCCS, the Aspen Institute, HCM Strategists and Sova to develop strategies to award additional degrees to transfer students each year.
- **Create reverse transfer programs:** Colorado developed a program to allow students to combine two-year and four-year credits into an associate degree.
- **Promote affordable pathway programs and nontraditional postsecondary options:** In 2017, SCHEV funded the development of affordable pathway programs that provided demonstrated cost savings to students. While these efforts can align to dual enrollment and transfer initiatives, a specific focus on how these pathways connect from pre-K-12 to postsecondary will help students better understand their options. In addition, options also should include promotion of programs like registered apprenticeship, industry certifications and other non-degree programs.
- **Statewide awareness and advising efforts:** SCHEV has proposed \$1.5 million in resources to improve access and awareness efforts, including coordination of access programs and professional development of counselor, schools, and community groups. While other efforts exist, improved coordination would make these efforts more effective.
- **Statewide and regional campaigns focused on re-engaging adults:** Degrees When Due is a three-year initiative led by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). The initiative is a cohort-based approach that helps states and institutions drive toward increased attainment. The program has an equity focus and is designed to reengage students that have stopped out.

### Completion

- **Campus-based intensive student supports:** The City University of New York Accelerated Student in Associate Programs (CUNY ASAP) helps students earn an

accelerated associates degree through a wide-range of supports. Students are required to meet regularly with their advisor and attend full-time. While the program has a higher cost per FTE, the cost per degree produced is lower than the traditional population.

- **Emergency completion and retention grants:** To help address the needs for the most at-risk students (those that already have taken advantage of financial aid and Pell), Minnesota provides state based emergency grants to assist students when life events threaten credential attainment. At least one Virginia institution has implemented an emergency aid program focused on students who are close to completion. The institution reported a 2% increase in their graduation rate in the year the program was implemented.
- **Near-completer initiatives:** Mississippi's Complete 2 Compete utilizes intensive marketing and data to draw students who are close to a degree. Complete Florida is targeted toward the state's adult population that has some college but no degree. The program is completely online, but it partners with institutions to provide the material.
- **Online programs:** In 2017, the General Assembly established the Online Virginia Network Authority, to coordinate online courses. The initiative emphasizes credit transfer, flexible schedules, and offers 37 different baccalaureate degrees. Online resources are part of a number of state completion initiatives.
- **Guided pathways/meta-majors:** California established a \$150 million Guided Pathways Award Program to support planning and implementation of guided pathways strategies. Though viewed as an institutional policy or strategy, states can play a role in establishing resources and supports for the development of guided pathways and ensure structures are in place for students to succeed.