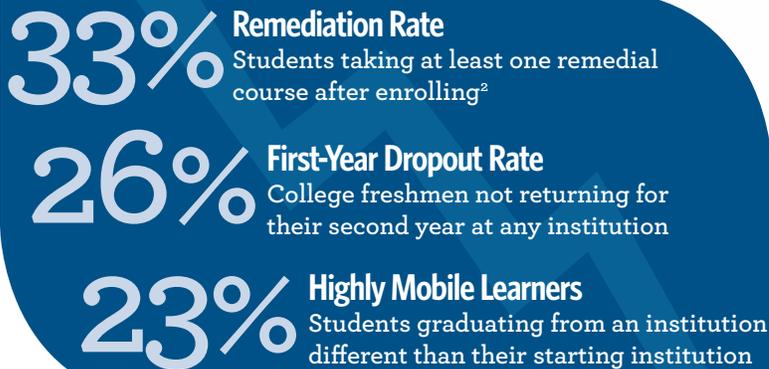
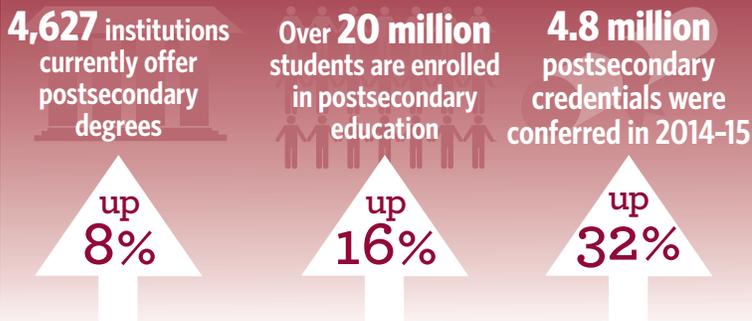




In today's society, a postsecondary education is critical to individual opportunity and national and global competitiveness. Higher education in the United States comprises a wide range of institutions serving a diverse student population with a variety of academic preparation levels. As the demand for higher education grows, understanding this diversity has become important to inform public dialogue on how students can gain access to and succeed in higher education.<sup>1</sup>

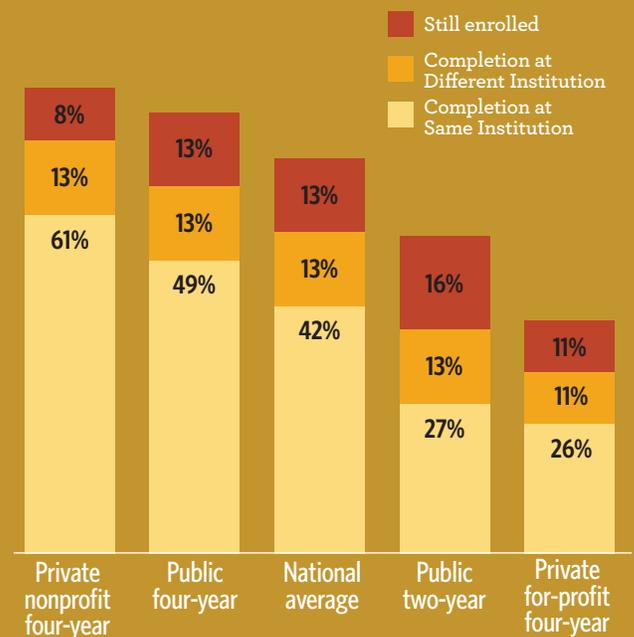
### Institutions, Students, and Degree Production

Increases from 2005-06 to 2014-15



### Student Outcomes

Students obtaining an undergraduate degree or certificate, or are still enrolled after six years at any institution



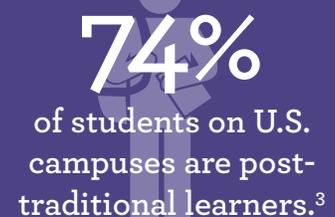
### Widespread Payoffs of College Education

Compared with those with a high school credential only, college-educated adults are:



### Profile of College Students

Typical undergraduates are no longer 18-year-olds straight out of high school.



**SOURCES:**

Baum, Sandy, Jennifer Ma, and Kathleen Payea. 2013. *Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*. New York: College Board.  
 Shapiro, Doug, Afet Dunder, Phoebe Khasiala Wakhungu, Xin Yuan, Angel Nathan, and Youngsik Hwang. 2016. *Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates—Fall 2010 Cohort*. Signature Report No. 12. Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.  
 U.S. Department of Education. 2015. *U.S. Digest of Education Statistics 2015*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.  
 U.S. Department of Education. 2015. *Web Tables: Demographic and Enrollment Characteristics of Nontraditional Undergraduates: 2011-12*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>1</sup> All data are most recent publicly available data.  
<sup>2</sup> Data reflect the 2011-12 academic year, the most recent publicly available data.  
<sup>3</sup> This definition of post-traditional students includes being independent for financial aid purposes, having one or more dependents, being a single caregiver, not having a traditional high school diploma, delaying postsecondary enrollment, attending school part time, and being employed full time.