Yesterday's Nontraditional Student is Today's Traditional Student

Today's typical college student is no longer an 18-year-old recent high-school graduate who enrolls full-time and has limited work and family obligations. Students today are older, more diverse and have more work and family obligations to balance.

The percentage of undergraduates who are:

Adults Age 25 or Older (2008)	**36%**	More than a third of undergraduate students are over age 25.[1] Over the next 10 years the adult student enrollment in college is projected to grow faster than for traditional age students.[2]
Independent Students (2008)[3]	**47%**	Independent students are: • 24 years or older • Married • Responsible for legal dependents other than a spouse • Orphans or wards of the court (or were wards of the court until age 18) or • Veterans of the U.S. armed services
Enrolled in a Public Two-Year College (2009)	**40%**	Enrollment at community colleges increased by an estimated 15 percent from fall 2008 to fall 2010.[4] Fifty-nine percent of community college students attended part-time; whereas, only 22 percent of undergraduate students attending public four-year institutions attended part-time.[5]
Enrolled Part-time (2008)[6]	**46%**	Undergraduate part-time enrollment has remained relatively steady since 1980, but with growing gaps between the price of tuition and the availability of grant aid, more students may enroll part-time and combine work and school.
Minority Students (2009)[7]	**36%**	Black and Hispanic students are 14.8 and 13.5 percent of the undergraduate student population respectively. According to projections these groups will make up 42 percent of the student population in 2019. This projected increase is mainly attributed to the expected 30 and 45 percent in expected overall growth in black and Hispanic populations compared to 7 percent growth for white students.[8]
Low-income (2008)	**40%**	The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) calculated that the total family income was less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line for 40 percent of undergraduate students.[9] Without income to cover basic living expenses, these students will most likely have to work more to cover direct and indirect college costs which could undermine academic success.[10]
Employed Part-time (2008)[11]	**43%**	Demos reported that working while in school to finance one's education is necessary for the majority of young college students. For young community college students specifically, 63 percent would be unable to attend college if they did not work.[12]
Employed Full-time (2008)[13]	**32%**	Working full-time can be a challenge for students who are balancing their course loads, school work and family responsibilities, yet almost a third of all undergraduates work 35 hours or more per week.
Parents (2008)[14]	**23%**	Nearly a quarter of students are parents. Workforce investments and education may produce benefits for adult participants as well as their children. For example, encouraging evidence shows that when mothers with low-education complete additional education, their children appear to have improved language and reading skills.[15]
Single Parents (2008)[16]	**13%**	More than one in eight students are single parents. Compared to married parents, single parents are more likely to have low-incomes. To pay tuition and arrange child care, they need more assistance (institutional, government and personal).[17]

[1] Author's calculations using NCES PowerStats Version 1. Source: "2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08)," U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, calculated 06/08/2011.

[2] "Table 21. Actual and projected numbers for total enrollment in all degree-granting institutions, by sex, age group, and attendance status: Fall 1994 through fall 2019," *Projections of Education Statistics to 2019*,U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, March 2011. Note that the IPEDS survey data does not breakout charts with age by undergraduate and post baccalaureate. The National Postsecondary Student Aid Study does provide undergraduate estimates by age groups so it was used above, but does not create projections. Therefore the projections are for students in all degree-granting institutions, which is defined as an institution that grant associate's or higher degrees and participates in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The degree-granting classification is very similar to the earlier higher education classification, but it includes more 2-year colleges and excludes a few higher education institutions that did not grant degrees. So post baccalaureate are included.

[3] Author's calculations using NCES PowerStats Version 1.

[4] *2011 Community College Fast Facts*, American Association of Community Colleges, January 2011, http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfacts.aspx.

[5] "Table 202: Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by level of enrollment, sex, attendance status, and type and control of institution: 2009," *Digest of Education Statistics 2010*, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, April 2011.

[6] "2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08)," U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Note that Table 213 in the *Digest of Education Statistics 2010* presents a smaller percentage but that is because the source is the IPEDs fall enrollment survey so only students enrolling in the fall, whereas NPSAS is based on the full year.

[7] The selected races and ethnicities total presented in Table 235 includes black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native . "Table 235: Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, attendance status, and level of student: Selected years, 1976 through 2009," *Digest of Education Statistics 2010*.

[8] These projections are also not broken out by undergraduate and post baccalaureate whereas they are for the 2009 numbers Table 235 from the *Digest of Education Statistics.* See: "Table 29: Actual and projected numbers for enrollment in all degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity: Fall 1994 through fall 2019," *Projections of Education Statistics to 2019*, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, March 2011.

[9] Data from the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey calculated by and presented in: Kevin Miller, Barbara Gault and Abby Thorman, *Improving Child Care Access to Promote Postsecondary Success Among Low-Income Parents*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, March 2011, http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/improving-child-care-access-to-promote-postsecondary-success-among-low-income-parents.

[10] Viany Orozco and Nancy K. Cauthen, *Work Less, Study More, and Succeed: How Financial Supports Can Improve Postsecondary Success*, Dëmos, 2009, http://www.immagic.com/eLibrary/ARCHIVES/GENERAL/DEMOS_US/D090929W.pdf.

[11] Author's calculations using NCES PowerStats Version 1.

[12] *Work Less, Study More, and Succeed* (2009).

[13] "(NPSAS:08)," U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

[14] "(NPSAS:08)," U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

[15] Neil Ridley and Elizabeth Kenefick, *Research Shows the Effectiveness of Workforce Programs: A Fresh Look at the Evidence*, Center for Law and Social Policy, May 2011, http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/workforce-effectiveness.pdf.

[16] "(NPSAS:08)," U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

[17] Data from the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey calculated and presented in: *Improving Child Care Access to Promote Postsecondary Success Among Low-Income Parents* (2011).

Thanks to the National Center for Education Statistics for providing valuable assistance on the data presented in this document.