

# Environmental Scan

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL  
RESEARCH AND PLANNING



## BRENAU UNIVERSITY

### FALL 2019 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Environmental Scanning is a process of identifying trends in the surrounding environment. These changes can be societal, technological, environmental, economically driven or based on political changes. An environmental scan is created with the intent to stimulate discussion for the strategic planning process by examining external and internal environments to help leverage and take advantage of potential opportunities and possible threats within the scope of long and short term plans.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SOCIETY (DEMOGRAPHICS)</b>	<b>4</b>
POPULATION	4
TRENDS IN COLLEGE READY POPULATION	5
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>11</b>
PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS	11
NUDGE TECHNOLOGY	11
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	<b>12</b>
INCREASING TUITION COSTS	12
PERCEIVED VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	14
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
GREEN CAREERS	15
<b>POLITICAL</b>	<b>16</b>
NATIONALLY - GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT	16
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	16
LOCALLY – UNMET NEED AND CHILD CARE COSTS	16
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>18</b>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Traditionally, an environmental scan follows the acronym STEEP and is organized with the topics of Society/Demographics, Technology, Economics, Environment, Politics and other trends as is relevant to Higher Education.

- **Society/Demographics** – Population growth continues to steadily rise in Georgia. College ready population projected to increase by 2026-27, however, there is an expected downturn in enrollment and along with that, continued racial diversification. Hispanic population growth is a major trend in the southern region.
  - **Technology** – The pros and cons of predictive analytics. Can we predict behaviors with an algorithmic technology? Nudge technology, could the future of behavioral economics improve student outcomes?
  - **Economics** – Increasing tuition costs and perceived value of a college education are both driving enrollments down. Should schools focus on successful completions despite enrollment size? How can institutions decrease the cost of completing a degree?
  - **Environment** – Exploring career paths in sustainability, forestry management and environmental studies. NC State's model for environmental studies and inclusivity of underrepresented groups could be a way to adapt to changing demographics.
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- **Politics** – The department of education repeals the gainful employment rule. How will immigration policy continue to shape international student enrollments? How does unmet need and lack of childcare influence adult students' ability to complete their degree.

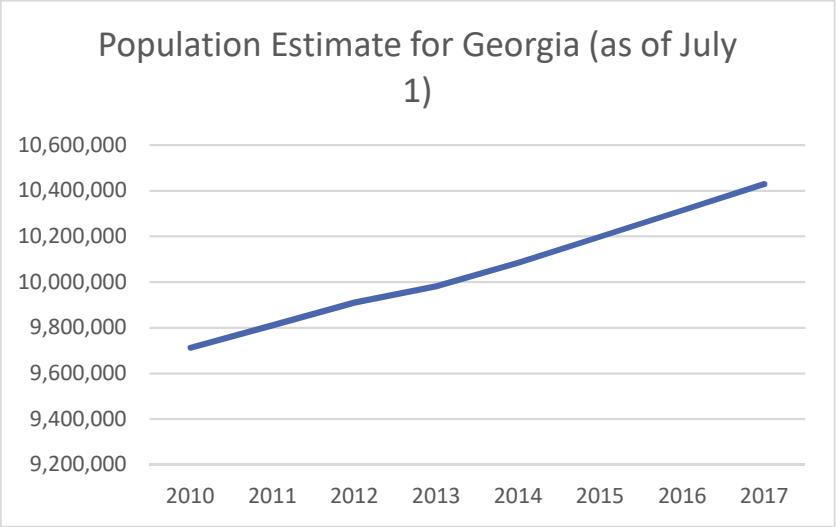


# SOCIETY (DEMOGRAPHICS)



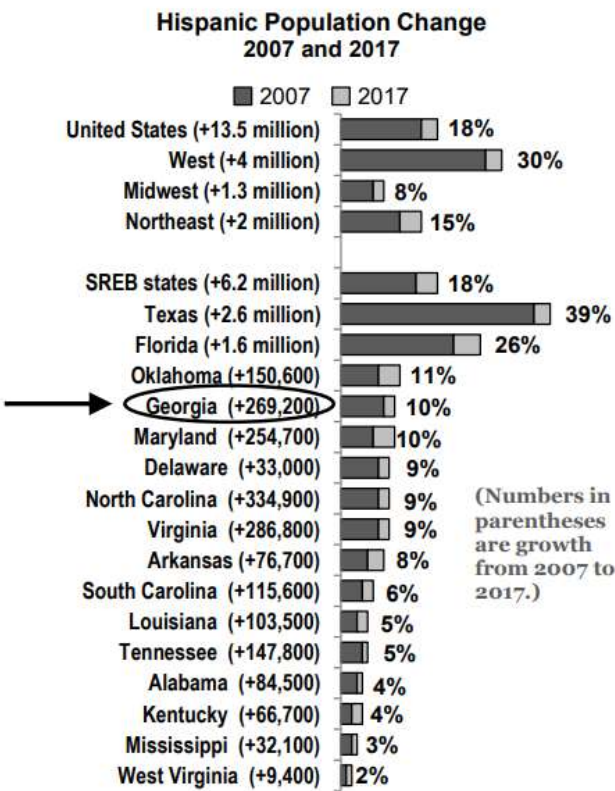
## POPULATION

Population estimates as of July 1, 2018 show Georgia exceeding 10,500,000 people with 24.1% of those being under the age of 18. Georgia’s population is estimated to increase by 12 percent by 2028 (“2019 SREB Fact Book on Higher Education,” 2019).



Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division  
Release Dates: For the United States, regions, divisions, states, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth, December 2017. For counties, municipios, metropolitan statistical areas, micropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and combined statistical areas, March 2018. For cities and towns (incorporated places and minor civil divisions), May 2018.(Bureau, n.d).

For Georgia and much of the southern region, the spike in demographic growth is marked specifically by an upward trend in its population of Latino/Hispanic residents. This demographic group’s growth has accounted for 47 percent in the region from 2007 to 2017. It is estimated that the Latino/Hispanic population makes up about 10 percent of Georgia’s overall population (“2019 SREB Fact Book on Higher Education,” 2019).



Source: Table 5, U.S. Census Bureau.

An examination of the college-ready population indicates an increase of 17 percent between 2012-13 and 2027-28 in the South. Georgia will experience a decline of high school graduates through 2020 after seeing a peak around 2018. However, a gradual upward trend which follows the national trend is seen through 2024-25 before a decline begins 2025-26. This decline is considerably steeper as a nation. Table 10, Projections of Education Statistics, (Hussar, William J & Bailey, Tabitha, 2019).

PROJECTED HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

TABLE 10: PROJECTIONS OF EDUCATION STATISTICS

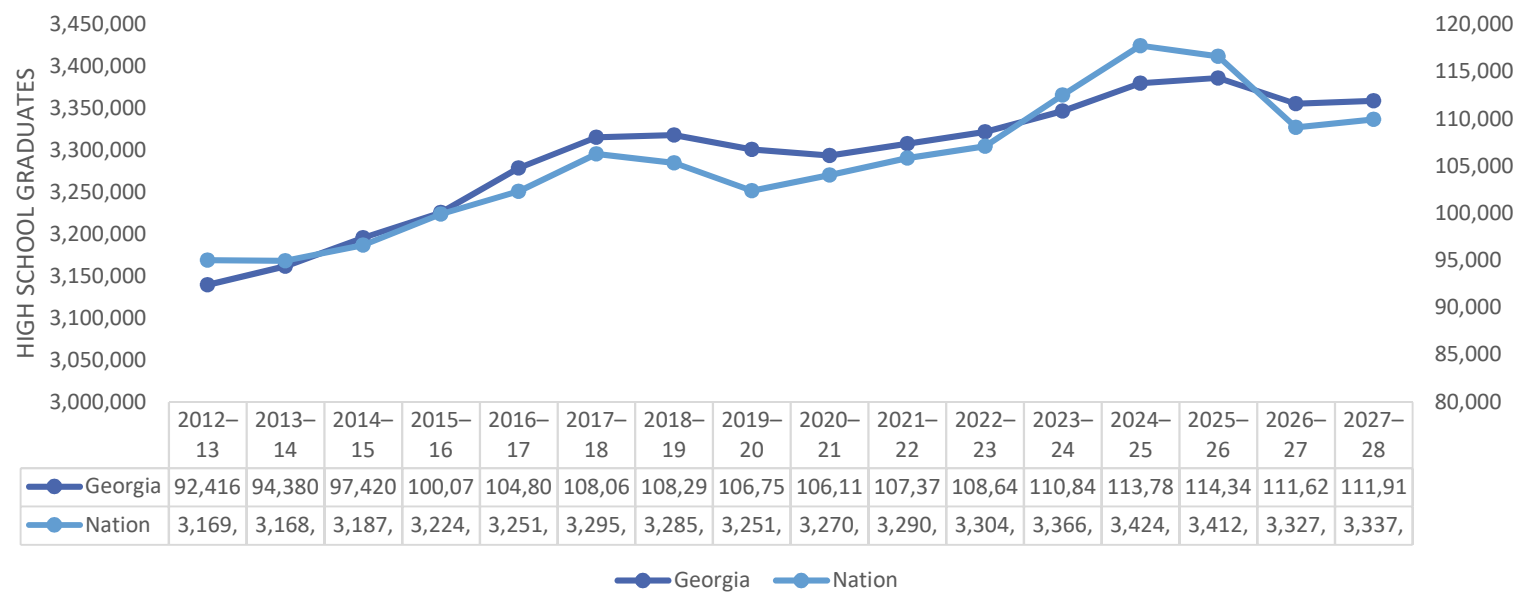
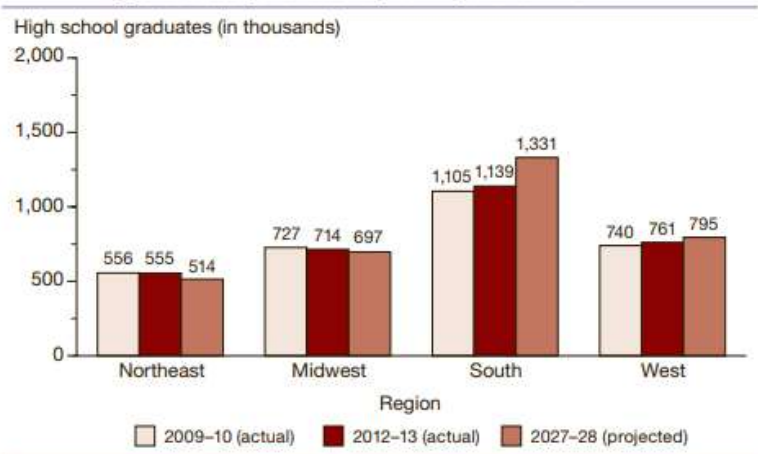


Figure 11. Actual and projected numbers for public high school graduates, by region: School years 2009-10, 2012-13, and 2027-28

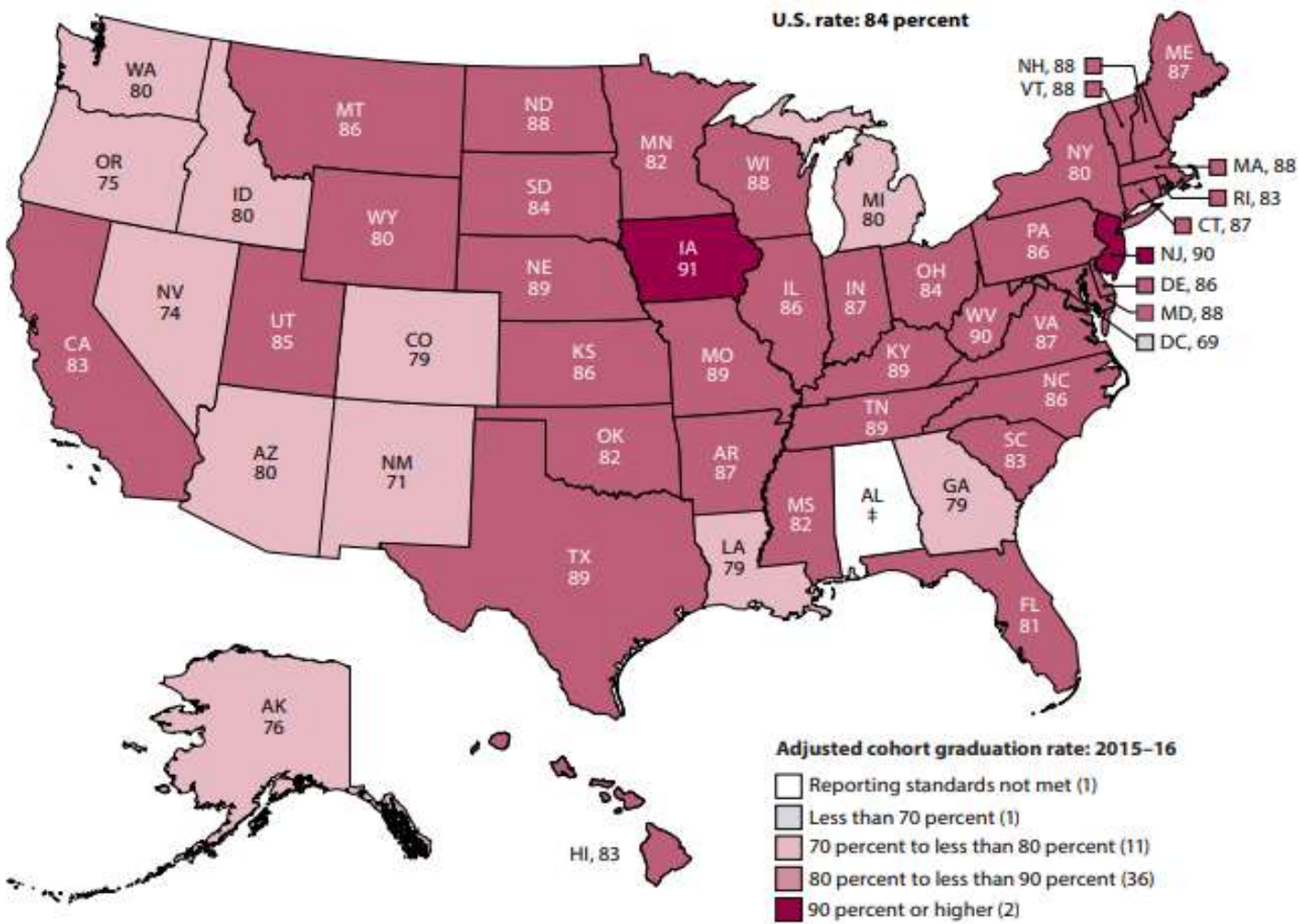


NOTE: Includes graduates of regular day school programs. Excludes graduates of other programs, when separately reported, and recipients of high school equivalency certificates. See the glossary for a list of states in each region. Mean absolute percentage errors of public high school graduates by state and region can be found in table A-14, appendix A. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2009-10; "State Dropout and Completion Data File," 2012-13; and State Public High School Graduates Projection Model, 1980-81 through 2027-28. (This figure was prepared April 2018.)

Figure 11 extracted from Projection of Education Statistics 2026 (Hussar, William J & Bailey, Tabitha, 2019)

Drop-out rates among high school students accounted for 4.8 percent of the 11.2 million enrolled as 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2016. The adjusted high school graduation rate of public high school students during the 2015-16 school year shows the U.S. high school graduation rate at 84 percent. Georgia's state public high school graduation rate sits at 70 percent to less than 80 percent. Georgia is among eleven other states which fall into this graduation rate. Those states include Louisiana, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and Michigan. There is an expected 15 percent increase in high school graduates between 2012-13 and 2026-27 in the South (McFarland, 2018).

**Figure 5.1. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) of public high school students, by state: 2015–16**



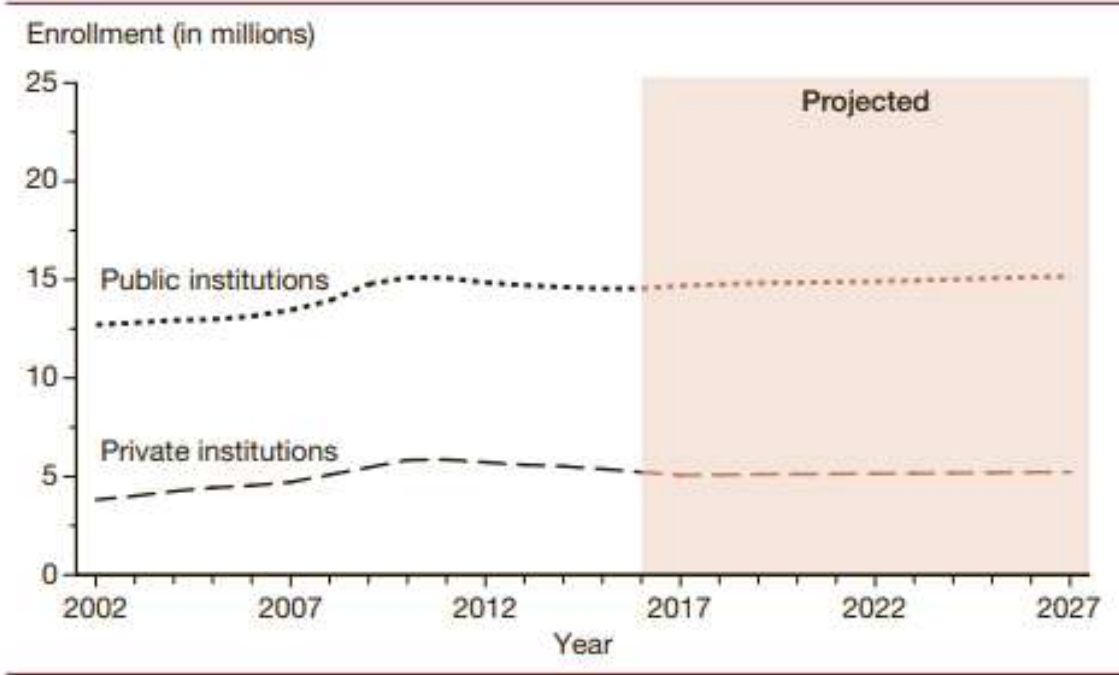
† Reporting standards not met. The Alabama State Department of Education indicated that their adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) data was misstated. For more information, please see the following press release issued by the state: <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/comm/News%20Releases/12-08-2016%20Graduation%20Rate%20Review.pdf>.  
NOTE: The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. Students who are entering 9th grade for the first time form a cohort for the graduating class. This cohort is "adjusted" by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die. The U.S. 4-year ACGR was estimated using the reported 4-year ACGR data from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in the United States 4-year ACGR estimate. The graduation rates displayed above have been rounded to whole numbers. Categorizations are based on unrounded percentages.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2015–16. See table 5.1.

Figure 5.1 extracted from Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2018 (McFarland, 2018)



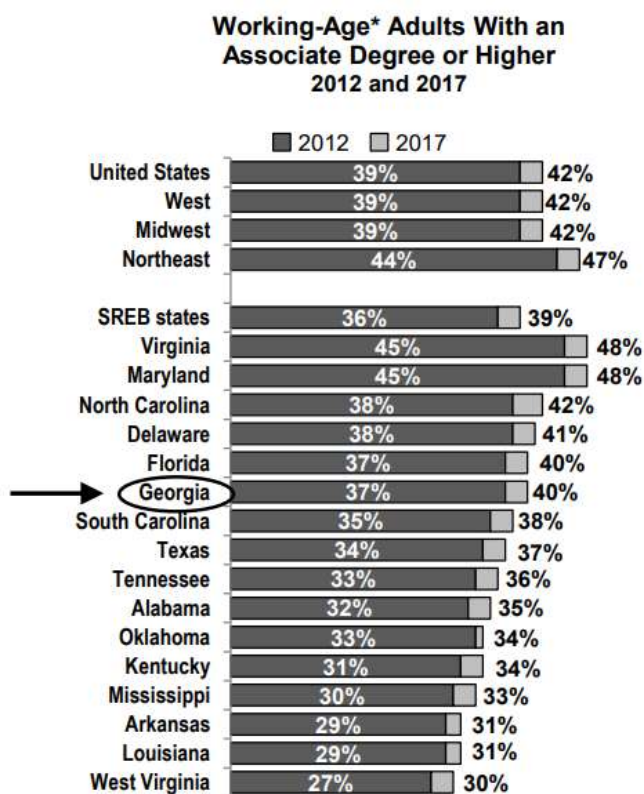
Actual enrollment in private degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by 36 percent between 2002 and 2016. Enrollment projections are expected to remain fairly flat through 2027 for both public and private institutions (Hussar, William J & Bailey, Tabitha, 2019). According to the SREB Fact book for 2019, college enrollment has dropped by about 1 million students. Continued consecutive decreases have been tracked from 2012 to 2017. Regardless of these enrollment decreases, racial diversity on campuses has been growing (“2019 SREB Fact Book on Higher Education,” 2019).

**Figure 22. Actual and projected numbers for enrollment in all degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Fall 2002 through fall 2027**

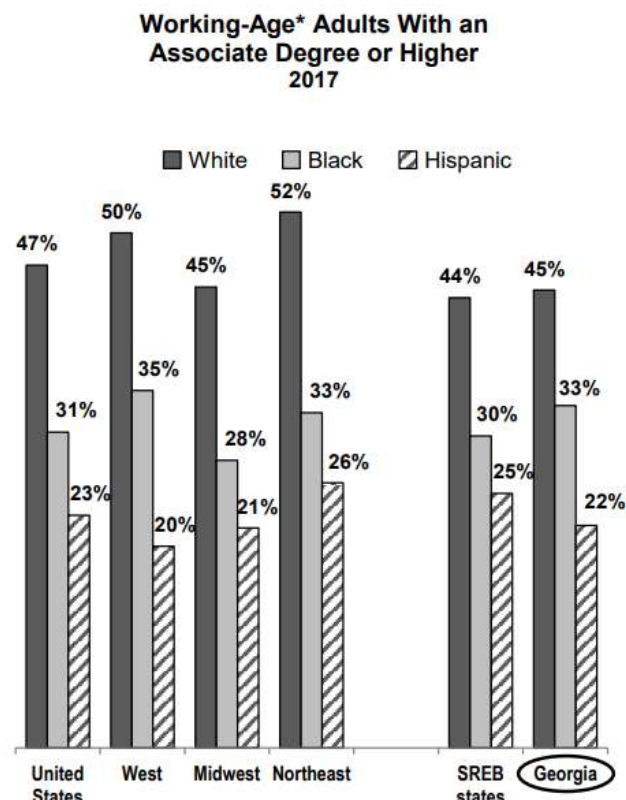


NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Spring 2003 through Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component; and Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, 2000 through 2027. (This figure was prepared April 2018.)

Figure 22 extracted from *Projections of Education Statistics to 2027*. (Hussar, William J & Bailey, Tabitha, 2019)



\*Ages 25 to 64.  
Source: Table 3, U.S. Census Bureau.



\*Ages 25 to 64.  
Source: Table 4, U.S. Census Bureau.

In 2017, 40 percent of working age adults in Georgia, ages 25 to 64, held an associate degree or higher. In 2017, Hispanics made up 22 percent of the working age adults in Georgia with at least an associate degree, while black adults made up 33 percent and white adults made up 45 percent ("2019 SREB Fact Book on Higher Education," 2019).

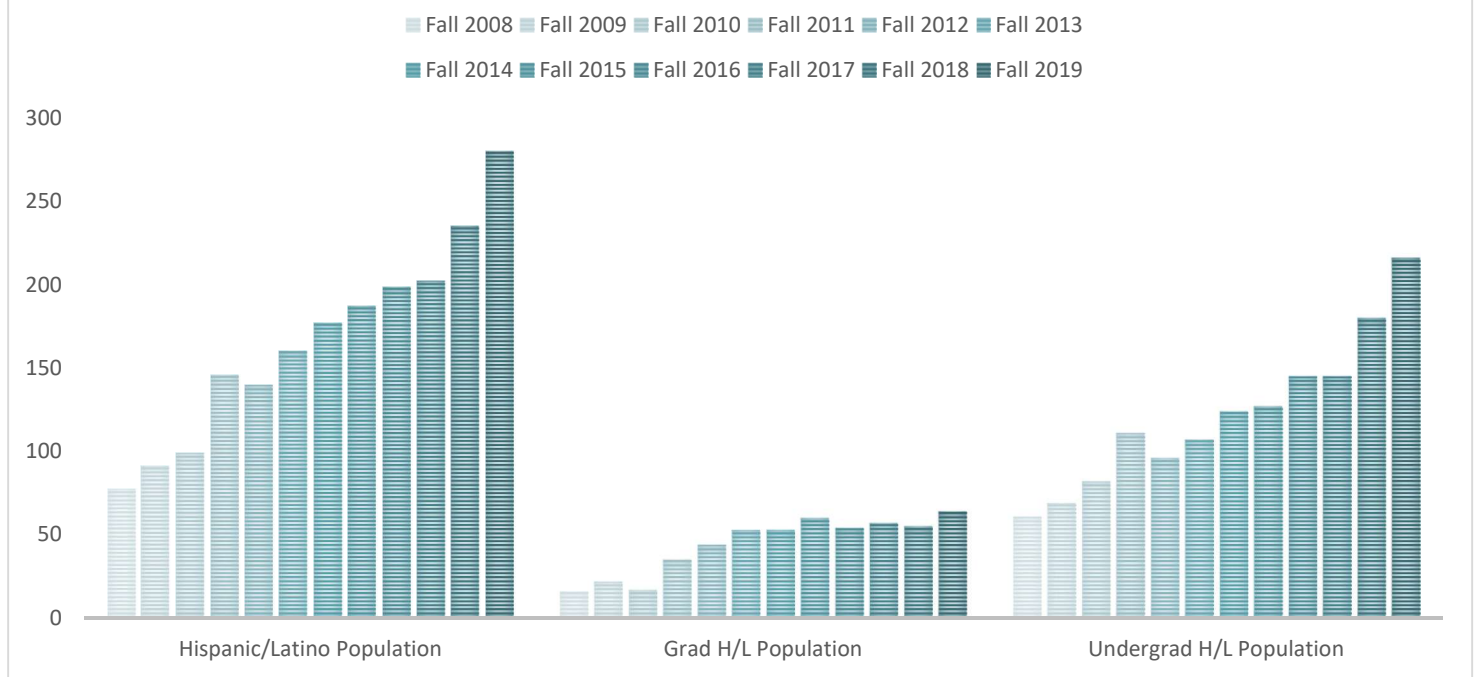
At Brenau, we have seen a 50 percent increase of Hispanic/Latino students from 2015 to 2019, and a dramatic 260 percent increase since 2008. This illustrates the demographic changes being experienced across higher education particularly in the south. The 2019 Georgia Higher Education handbook (Lee, 2019), shows a 606 percent increase in Latino enrollment in higher education. As some other demographic groups decline, the Hispanic/Latino population has increased at Brenau. This is consistent with the WICH analysis showing a drop in white high school graduates which will hit a peak of 14 percent decline by 2030 (*Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 2016). The Latino and Asian population will grow the fastest with Asian population exceeding Latino growth overall (Lee, 2019).

Most U.S. colleges & universities have seen a drop in enrollment between 2012 and 2017. Across the U.S. the enrollment for men dropped 4 percent and 5 percent for women. For Georgia there was one percent increase in enrollment of men but a drop of one percent enrollment for women. In general, across Georgia, enrollment of black and white students decreased between 2012 and 2017 by about 12,400 students ("2019 SREB Fact Book on Higher Education," 2019).

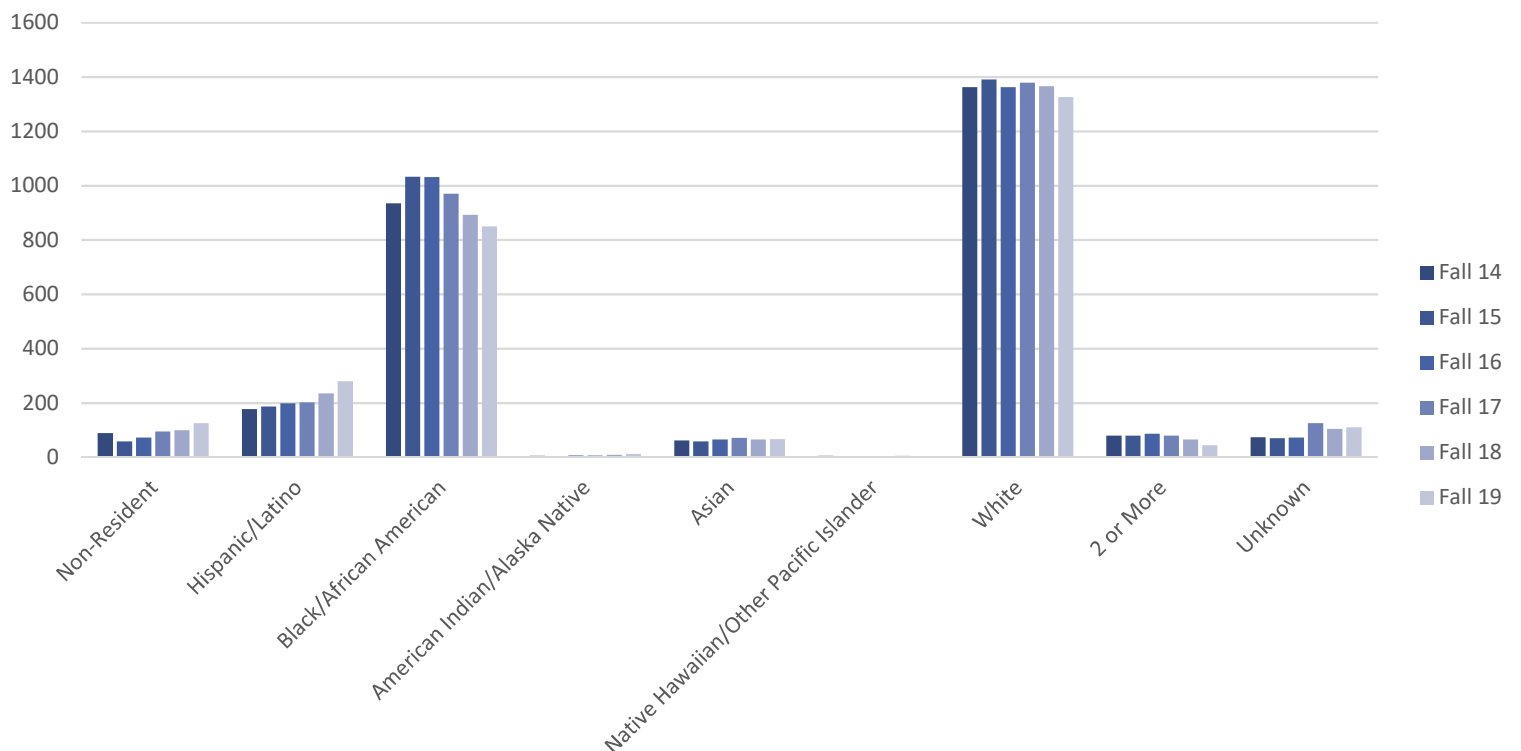
Some institutions facing similar dilemmas with enrollment challenges are looking toward accepting smaller enrollments with a focus on improving retention and graduation rates. This may be a viable path going forward as enrollment of traditional age students for southern states may continue on a steady growth but is projected to drop after 2025 due to a decrease in birth rates just after The Great Recession of 2008 (Kelderman, 2019).



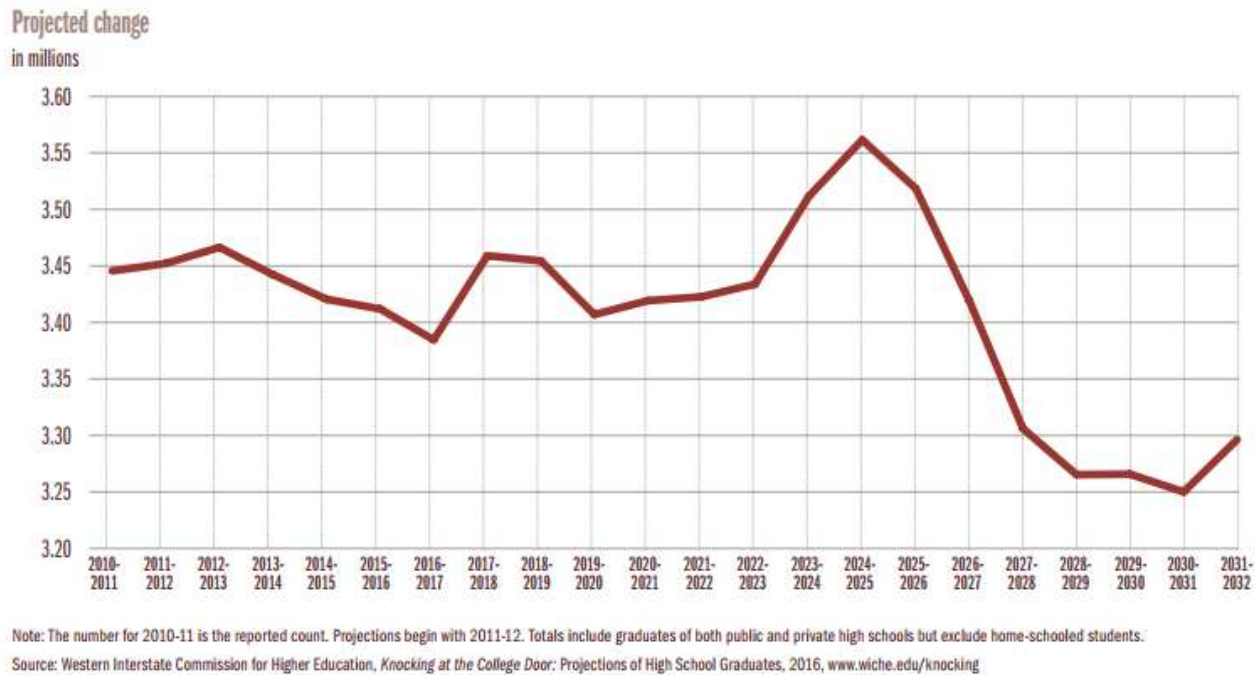
## BRENAU HISPANIC/LATINO ENROLLMENT TREND



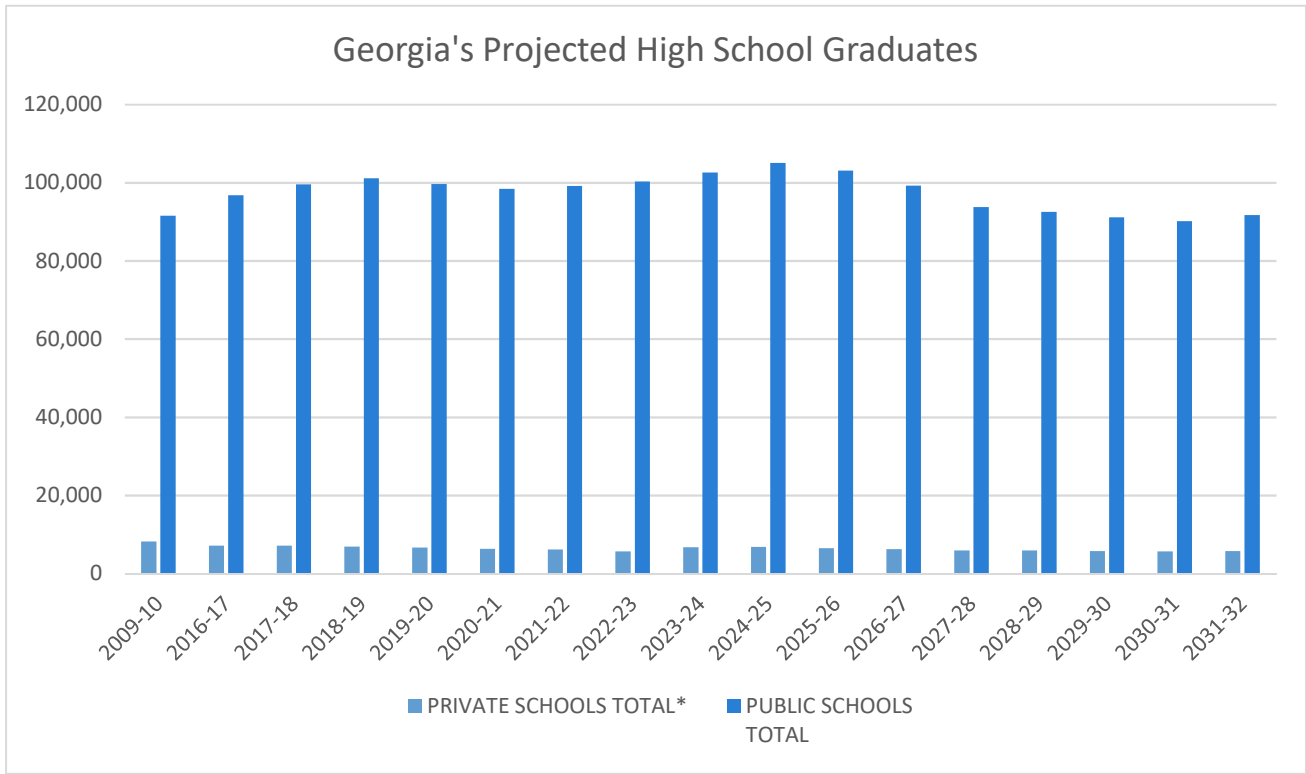
## Demographic Changes over Six Fall Terms - Brenau Overall



THE CHARTS BELOW ILLUSTRATE THE DECLINE IN COLLEGE READY POPULATIONS AFTER 2025.



Projected Change chart (as cited on Kelderman, 2019).



Data in chart extracted from Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 2016.



# TECHNOLOGY

## PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

Can predictive analytics solve retention issues? One school found limitations with the use of algorithmic technology to steer human behavior. Austin Peay University in Tennessee developed a tool called Degree Compass. The new technology was supposed to help students make decisions on what courses to take based on their past course taking and grade history. Despite that the new technology was not promoted as a way to propel students towards successful graduation, it's initial introduction found it praiseworthy because graduation rates rose from 31 percent to 36 percent in just five years ("Are You Still There?," 2018). However, the limitations encountered with the new technology boiled down to some usual culprits:

- Staff turnover left the project with less enthusiastic and knowledgeable participants
- Challenges with integration
- Lack of student interest in using the new technology
- Accurate recommendations depended on student's college level grade history

All in all, once the hype settled, many of the upticks in retention and graduation rates dipped back and paper degree

planning seemed to resume being the popular choice among most students, especially first-time Freshmen.

## NUDGE TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a necessary tool in higher education. It is constantly changing and updating and everywhere we look whether it is teaching a course, checking our email or checking our calendar, there are boundless digital distractions vying for our attention. It's no wonder that life feels so demanding and overwhelming. When it comes to staying organized as a working student with various responsibilities, sometimes it feels like life should come with a personal assistant. A new technology, called nudge tech which is employed in different ways, has been touted as the next higher education necessity and top strategic technology by Gartner Research (Nudge Technology & Higher Education, n.d.).

Those who have used nudge technology can attest to its effectiveness in reminding them to drink water, stand up and stretch their legs or pick up their dry cleaning. But there's more to nudge technology than that. Nudging or behavioral economics has gained a foothold among various groups including institutions, consultant managers, and government entities (Nudge Technology & Higher Education, n.d.). Nudging in higher education could lead to better outcomes for students by integrating SMS messaging to remind students to fill out a FAFSA, remind them to enroll for the next term, buy their books once they register, and the list goes on. The popularity for this option is the audience. We are looking at Gen Z students who are native technology users. This is the best way to reach them and capture their attention. The nudge tech approach meets students on their level and it could help institutions leverage more data and data analytics by evaluating how this technology impacts student behavior.

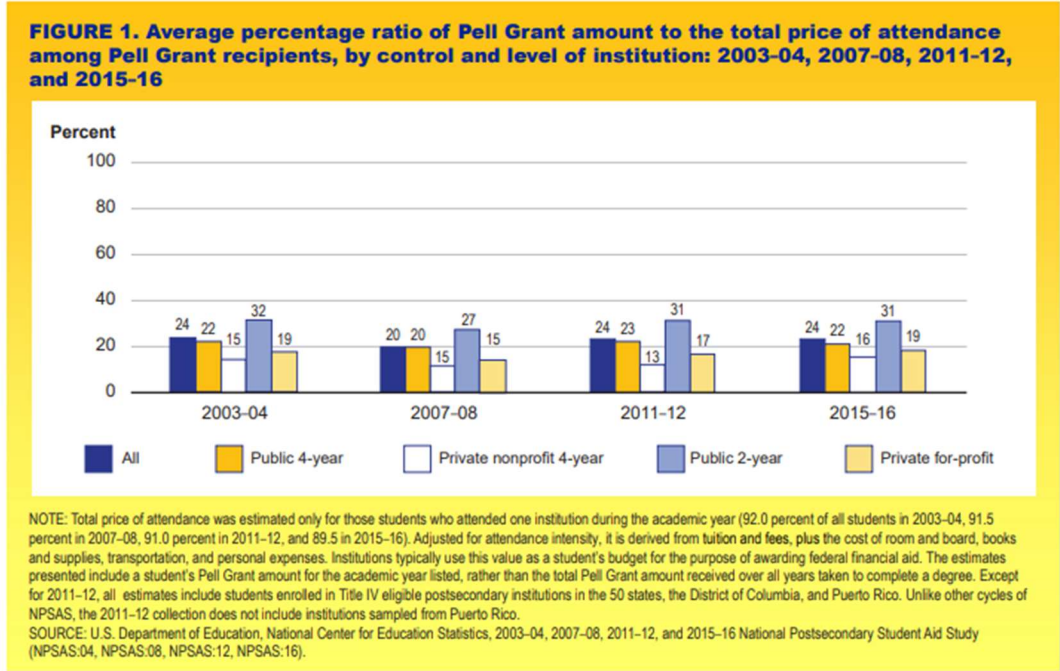




# ECONOMIC

## INCREASING TUITION COSTS

Tuition price increases are the norm at most colleges and universities. The average tuition at private colleges increased by three percent. US News and World Report places the average tuition at private schools at about \$35,000 per year (“See the Average College Tuition in 2019-2020,” 2019). With the additional cost of books, housing, and food, it’s challenging for students to manage the costs, even with grant aid and other tax benefits.



Grants like the Pell Grant covered an average of 24 percent of the total price of attendance for academic years between 2003-04, 2011-12, and 2015-16. This is across all types of postsecondary schools. The cost of 2-year institutions had more covered by Pell than 4-year public or private institutions regardless of control. Pell Grant recipients attending private non-profit and for profit 4-year institutions made up the highest population of students taking out federal student loans (Data Points, U.S. DOE, 2019).

Fig. 1 extracted from Data Points, U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2019-489Rev August 2019.

A continued decline in wages compounds the increased education debt situation. Median income has not changed much in the last thirty years. According to the Federal Reserve, middle class families have not quite recovered from losses they incurred during the Great recession and coupled with the meager financial increases in income seen by the middle class of one percent per year adjusted after inflation, it can be challenging to consider college tuition as an option and also save towards retirement and other life's expected and unexpected needs. For these families, student loan debt is the only option and loan debt has more than doubled from 2006 to 2018 ("Speech by Governor Brainard on "Is the Middle Class within Reach for Middle-Income Families?," 2019). This poses a great challenge for institutions attempting to find and recruit students who are able to afford tuition and are also academically ready for college rigors.

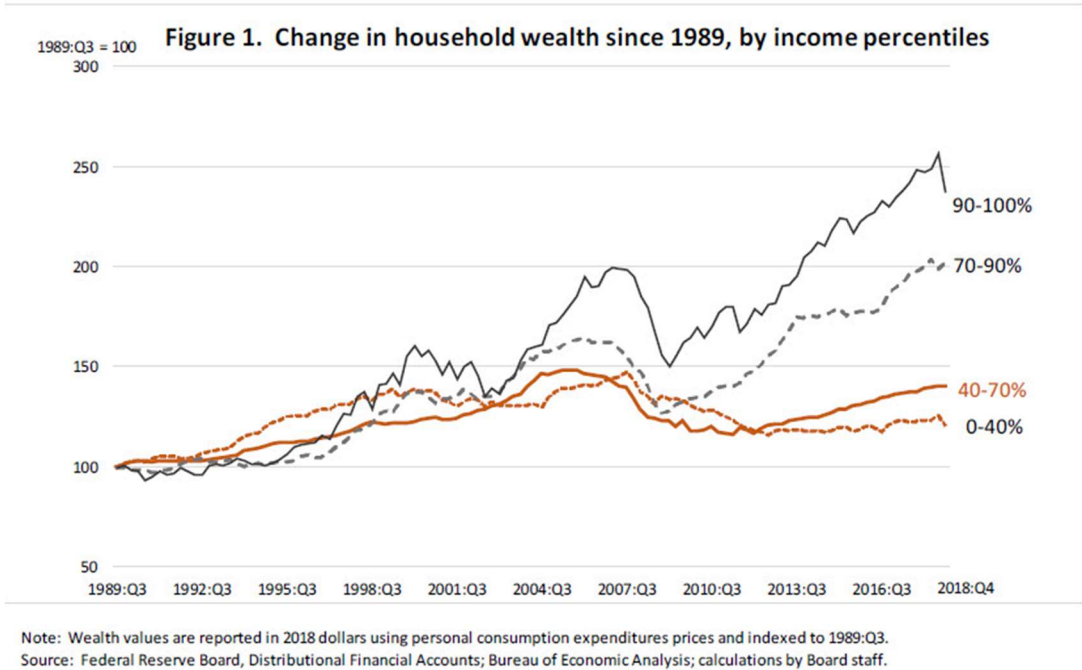
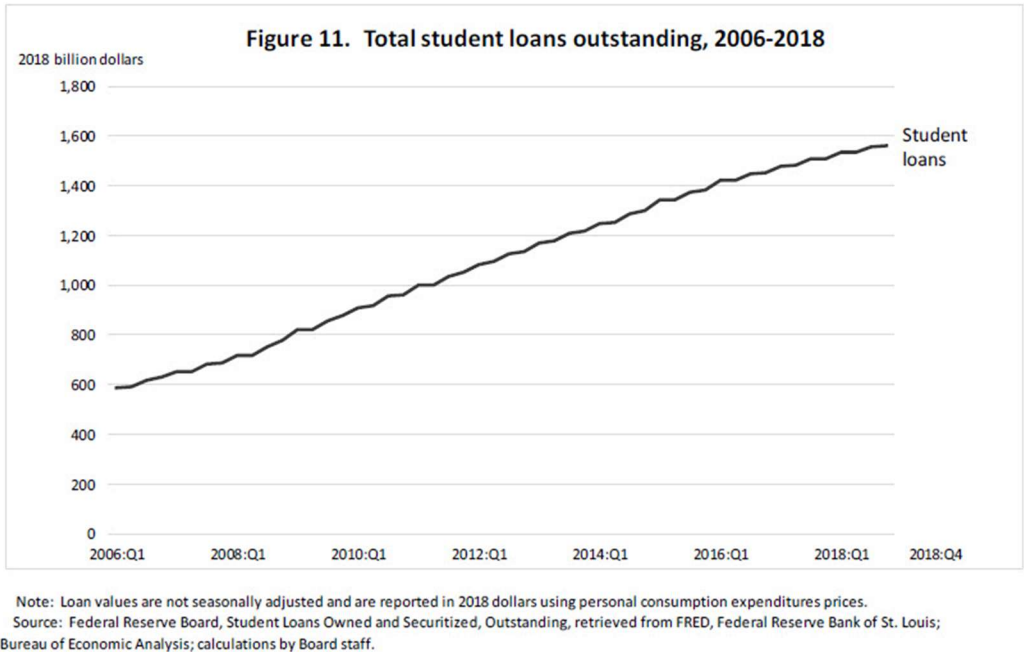


Figure 1 & Figure 11 extracted from Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System website:  
<https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/brainard20190510a.htm>

The middle income is between the 40th and 70th percentile in the chart above based on households with incomes between \$40,000 and \$85,000 in 2018.



White Georgians with a bachelor's degree have a median income of about \$58,000, while Latino and black Georgians with the same credentials earned about \$43,100 and \$45,000, respectively. In general, the median income in Georgia is about \$68,000. Most public colleges and universities serve students with family incomes under the median income (Lee, 2019).

Private institutions face additional financial pressures in the form of increasing operating costs and drops in enrollment which continually lead to higher tuition discount rates (Kelderman, 2019). According to a survey by the National Association for College and University Business officers (NACUBO), tuition discount among private institutions is at an average of 52 percent (Kelderman, 2019). Moody's investor Service has projected that 40 percent of private institutions will fall short of a three percent revenue growth ("Research: Moody's—US higher education outlook remains negative on low tuition revenue growth—Moody's," n.d.).

## PERCEIVED VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A common sentiment towards higher education indicates that many find higher education too expensive and students are not graduating with the skills needed for successful employment. A New America poll indicates that a larger percentage of people believe community colleges (81 percent) and public four year universities (65 percent) are worth the cost but many don't have the same outlook about private (44 percent) and for-profit institutions (40 percent) (Kelderman, 2019).

Dissatisfaction with the cost and perceived gains of an education at a niche/unique educational environment may result in students seeking out more cost effective avenues. Many opt to steer closer to home and complete an education at a public setting. This exposes another reality faced by liberal arts colleges and universities. Students cannot connect the education they received with the jobs they end up getting. "Up to 40 percent of liberal arts grads said that, if they had to do it again, they would have picked a different major" ("Liberal arts colleges struggle to make a case for themselves," 2018). "Among humanities graduates who were dissatisfied with their job, a majority felt there was no relationship to their degree" (*The State of the Humanities 2018: Graduates in the Workforce & Beyond*, n.d. p.18). Institutions need to identify across all programs being offered, if they are offering what students want and need in order to enter the job force prepared.

Some of the most sought after skills by employers include a combination of hard and soft skills. According to Wiley Education Services, the most sought after hard skills are strategic thinking and analytical skills (48%), computer skills (46%), project management (32%) and the most sought after soft skills are leadership (39%), adaptability (36%), and communication (36%). Up to 64 percent of employers have collaborated with schools to build a curriculum which is focused on workforce needs ("Infographic," 2019).

Apprenticeship opportunities have become a popular choice for many who don't want to accrue massive debt through education loans. The apprenticeship model allows for a combination of in classroom learning with paid on-the-job experience. The Labor department reported there were over 600,000 apprenticeship programs in 2019. That's an increase from just under 400,000 in 2013. Over a million people are estimated to be participating in some type of apprenticeship. Employers have found success in creating apprenticeship programs because they help promote diversity, creates a pipeline of employees, and helps to find talent for hard-to-fill positions. The numbers could be higher as not all apprenticeship programs are registered (Stockman, 2019). Universities could offer a direct line from graduation to employment if some type of partnership or collaboration can be further explored with potential employers. One example of this successful endeavor is The Hartford Insurance's work with community colleges. Since 2015, Hartford has given students the opportunity to take summer apprenticeships and about 80 of those students have been hired full-time (Stockman, 2019).

Finding ways to reduce the cost of tuition has inspired some institutions to use competency based strategies. As students demonstrate mastery of academic content regardless of modality they are allowed to progress to subsequent courses. According to Wiley Education service, 60+ percent of chief academic officers are considering various competency based strategies ("5 Areas CAOs are Considering to Increase Institutional Value," 2017). Another approach, by Lasell University, which recently transitioned from college to university status in August 2019, includes reduced online tuition credit hours for undergraduates taking online courses during the summer. The reduced cost per credit hour is 36 percent of the normal tuition charged (Filippone, 2017).



Some struggling institutions have opted to merge with other institutions and some have closed entirely. Between 2014 and 2017, a large majority of institutions which closed their doors were for-profit institutions, but 55 of those between 2016 and 2019 were all nonprofit institutions (Kelderman, 2019). More mergers and closures are anticipated but that too can be changed if institutions adapt to the changing demographics and market changes.

## ENVIRONMENT

### GREEN CAREERS

Given the condition of climate change and the damaging fires occurring in California, Australia and the Amazon rainforest, along with rising sea levels, it seemed only fitting to consider careers in forestry management and conservation. According to PLT, Project Learning Tree, Green Jobs or careers in sustainability are among the fastest growing and evolving segments of the world's economy. PLT is the award-winning environmental education initiative of the Sustainable Forestry initiative. PLT has developed educational materials to help young people explore careers available in sustainable forestry and conservation. The *Green Jobs: Exploring Forest Careers material* covers a diverse range of topics from instructional activities to exploring careers in the forest sector. Among the varied careers, a few are mentioned below:

- Arborist
- Environmental Educator
- Policy Advisor
- Soil Scientist
- Sustainability Manager

The material focuses on leadership skills which help those looking for a green career to learn to advocate and collaborate for the future of conservation efforts. Terry Baker, CEO at the Society of American Foresters, says "...Inspiring the next generation of forestry professionals and conservation leaders is fundamental to our future" ("PLT Launches Green Jobs," 2019).

Many universities across the United States already offer degrees in forestry and environmental studies. Some of those include: Auburn University, University of Arizona, UC Berkeley, Yale School of Forestry, North Carolina State University, University of Florida and the University of Georgia. Forestry management is a STEM major as well.

North Carolina State University College of Natural Resources offers a diverse range of undergraduate programs like ecosystem assessment, environmental technology and management, parks, recreation and tourism management, and paper science and engineering, as well as other forestry graduate programs. NC State University boasts a 93 percent job placement rate just three month after graduation for those in their forest management program ("What Can I Do With a Forestry Degree?," 2018)

NC State has partnered with Resource Management Services, LLC (RMS) which is one of the leading managers of forest investments for institutional investors. NC State will receive a \$20,000 donation for their Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources in the College of Natural Resources. The funding initiative is centered on creating diversity among undergraduate and graduate students going into forestry careers. Minorities are not widely representative of the forestry profession ("New Fund Established to Promote Diversity in Forestry," 2019). RMS was established in 1950 by John M. Bradley and Harry E. Murphy. Mr. Bradley is a graduate of Yale University's forestry program and Mr. Murphy is a graduate of the forestry program at Pennsylvania State University. RMS is a private company offering its clients services focused on funding retiree pensions, capitalizing university endowment programs and providing resources in the financial sector for charitable foundations.

To bolster enrollment of underrepresented groups, NC State has also partnered with Tuskegee University in Alabama to offer an accelerated graduate degree in forestry careers. The program will require students spend three years at Tuskegee followed by

two years at NC State (“Creating a More Diverse Workforce in Forestry,” 2019). Through this program students will earn a Bachelor’s of Environmental, Natural Resources and Plant Sciences from Tuskegee and a Master’s of Forestry from NC State.

## POLITICAL

### NATIONALLY - GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

The department of education repealed the gainful employment rule. This rule was meant to increase accountability of institutions promoting lower quality career education programs. The change will put the focus on a market-based accountability format. This will increase data published by the College Scorecard to include program size, the median Federal student loan, the median Graduate PLUS loan debt and the median Parent PLUS loan debt as well as the monthly payments associated with those types of debt, student loan default and repayment rates.

These changes go into effect July 1, 2020 (“Department of Education Repeals Gainful Employment Regulations,” 2019). In spite of the available data on the college scorecard, it does well to note that these data are only representative of the data available on students who took out federal financial aid in the form of Title IV grants and loans (Field of Study Data Documentation, 2019).

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Immigrations policy changes continue to give international students a not-so-welcomed view of coming to the United States to study. University student services administrative offices also face added paperwork in their efforts to assist international students with issues related to their visas. Instead of being able to focus their time on typical aspects of helping international students become familiar with their new surroundings, helping them open a bank account or worry about English tutoring, they are finding more of their time consumed managing ongoing visa issues. The additional stringent immigrations rules have made it more difficult for international student to enter the United States, maintain their legal status and also apply for work permits (“Visa rules are restricting the future of international students in the US,” 2019).

Of the institutions which participated in the Institute of International Education’s 2017–18 survey, 83 percent said denials or delays with student visas were a contributing factor to the most recent seven percent decline in international enrollments (Wong, 2019). The prior year saw a three percent drop.

In addition, an upcoming proposed change to immigrations policy, would introduce a limit for how long an international students could stay in the United States. Under this proposal simply renewing a student visa would no longer afford an international student an indefinite stay in the United States. This would mean students would have to complete their studies and graduate within the proposed limited number of years. The limit would make it challenging to pursue additional graduate level studies, particularly doctoral degrees which can take several years to complete (“Visa rules are restricting the future of international students in the US,” 2019)

Though international student populations seeking education outside their home country has more than doubled, in the United States, international student populations dropped from 28 percent to 22 percent from 2001 to 2018. According to NAFSA, this decrease has cost the U.S. economy 5.5 billion and over 40,000 jobs (*Losing Talent: An Economic and Foreign Policy Risk America Can’t Ignore*, 2019) .

### LOCALLY – UNMET NEED AND CHILD CARE COSTS

According to the 2019 Higher Education Data Handbook (Lee, 2019), in 2014-15 over 112,000 students had unmet need. Unmet need is the gap between financial aid and financial need necessary to pay for college tuition. This, among others, is a contributing factor that decreases degree completion. Though Georgia has a very generous state financial aid system, known as HOPE, Georgia does not offer any broad need-based aid scholarship programs. This means, that students turn to federal sources

for need-based aid in the form of loans. As mentioned previously, black students make up the largest group acquiring student loan debt. Among public schools, graduation rates for black and Latino students lag behind white students. Black student graduation rates are 47 percent, Latino student graduation rates are 58 percent, while white student graduation rates are at 66 percent; only Asian students surpass white students with a 76 percent graduation rate (Lee, 2019).

The problem is exacerbated by lack of child care access for adult learners age 25 and older. Most child care facilities have limited care during day-time hours and they are costly. Some estimates put child care costs at higher than in-state tuition costs at over half the U.S. states college and universities (Douglas-Gabriel, 2019). The Department of Education federal grant, known as the Child Care Access Means Parents In School program, is awarded to institutions to help provide assistance to low-income students to help cover the cost of child care. Schools are allowed to apply for up to 1 percent of the total Pell funds awarded to their students the prior year.

Recently, Brenau was awarded \$42,120 in grant funds through this DOE Child Care Access Means Parents in School program. Brenau will be awarding the grant money to full-time students who maintain a 2.5 GPA and above (“Grant to help student-parents with child care costs,” 2019). Brenau is hopeful that this financial assistance will help students complete their degrees. Each student’s Pell status will dictate how much money is awarded to them.

Through a study conducted by the National Clearing House called *Some College, No Degree*, they have identified that thirty-six million Americans in their system hold some postsecondary education and training but have never completed their degree (“*Some College, No Degree—2019*,” 2019). Of this population, ten percent are potential completers. Potential completers are more likely to re-enroll and complete a program of study. The *Some College, No Degree* study showed that over 900,000 students have since re-enrolled and many of those students have re-enrolled in an online program. Most completers tended to re-enroll in the same state where they last enrolled. In Georgia, the population of some college, no degree students is just above 720,000 and that makes about two percent of the state’s share of national some college, no degree students. Four percent of those who did re-enroll in Georgia completed their degree at a private nonprofit 4-year institution (“*Some College, No Degree—2019*,” 2019).

Up to 56 percent of some college, no degree population stopped out of postsecondary education in their twenties or younger and the median length of time elapsed before re-enrollment was about ten years. The most common credential attained by most returning adults were certificates or associates degrees. The majority of those that did re-enroll and completed their credentials were under thirty years of age and more of them were women (54 percent). The demographic of the some college, no degree re-enrolled population tends to be mostly African-American or Hispanic/Latino. The majority of the completers pursued degrees in business, management, liberal arts, general studies, humanities, and health professions and related services (“*Some College, No Degree—2019*,” 2019).

Barriers to completion for adult learners identified by the *Some College, No Degree* study include policies and procedures that only address traditional college aged students, lack of student support services, lack of affordable childcare access, limited class scheduling, and lack of information on financial aid support (“*Some College, No Degree—2019*,” 2019). If we consider that a decade or longer has elapsed since the some college, no degree population left postsecondary education the first time, we can imagine they are returning to postsecondary education with many more challenges than a young person right out of high school. They are returning not only to tackle multiple course assignments but to juggle family/work demands and responsibilities.



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