HIGHER EDUCATION

The Pell Partnership:

Ensuring a Shared Responsibility for Low-Income Student Success

Photo Courtesy of Smith College

The Education Trust

SEPTEMBER 2015

TO THE POINT

- In this report and on our website, we provide graduation rate data for Pell Grant recipients at 1,149 four-year public and private nonprofit colleges and universities. This is the first time information of this kind is widely available to the general public.
- The average graduation gap between Pell and non-Pell students at the institutional level is only 5.7 percentage points. But the national gap is 14 points, a result of large gaps at specific colleges, as well as too many Pell students enrolling at colleges with very low graduation rates.
- Closing the national gap requires both changes in outcomes and access. Colleges with large gaps need to do more to ensure low-income student success, and more selective institutions should open their doors to more Pell students.

But even if all institutional-level gaps in completion between Pell and non-Pell students were eliminated, there would still be a considerable national gap because too many Pell students attend institutions where few students of any sort graduate, and too few attend institutions where most students graduate. The data and illustrations in this report suggest that underperforming institutions — rather than the Pell Grant program itself — deserve more scrutiny.

The Pell Partnership:

Ensuring a Shared Responsibility for Low-Income Student Success

BY ANDREW HOWARD NICHOLS

In 2013-14, the federal government spent roughly $31.5 billion on Pell Grants, the primary federal aid program to help low-income students pay for college.[1] The program represents a significant investment by the federal government, giving more than 8.6 million students last year access to the postsecondary education that they might not have otherwise received.[2] And while it helps low-income students, it also benefits colleges and universities. They are the final recipients of these funds and must be good stewards of this investment by doing their best to ensure that Pell students complete a degree.

Unfortunately, too many American college students don't get the support they need to successfully complete that all-important degree. Less than 60 percent of all students at four-year institutions finish a degree in six years.[3] But what about Pell Grant recipients specifically? For years, we've known very little, particularly about how these students fare at specific colleges compared with other students. Students, parents, and policymakers have been left to guess how well institutions are serving Pell students. That is … until now.

The Education Trust spent the past year gathering graduation rate data for Pell Grant recipients. Using four primary sources, we collected data representing nearly 1,150 public and private, nonprofit institutions across the nation. As described more fully in the *Methods and Data Collection* section, data were collected from 1,149 of the 1,500 public and nonprofit bachelor's degree-granting institutions that met our criteria (for-profit and non-specialized colleges were not included). Out of 1,500 colleges that were targeted, our sample of 1,149 institutions educates nearly 85 percent of the first-time, full-time Pell students and represents 9 of 10 publics and 7 in 10 nonprofit privates at these institutions.

For the students in our sample, we found a large national gap between completion rates for Pell Grant recipients and non-Pell students — 51 percent vs. 65 percent, respectively. That 14 percentage-point gap is not out of line with findings generated from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, which reveal a gap of roughly 15 to 20 percentage points, leading critics of the Pell Grant program to label it a poor investment of taxpayer resources.[4]

But the institutional-level data actually tell a very different — and much more positive — story. Although gaps at some individual schools are egregious, the average gap within institutions is much smaller: 5.7 percent. In other words, at the average college in our sample, the low-income students who receive Pell support graduate at rates only 5.7 points below those of students who don't have the extra challenges that most low-income students have to navigate as they work their way toward a college degree.

We still have work to do to close these gaps. And the good work of the many institutions around the country that have already closed their gaps completely helps show the way. In this report, we describe the efforts at a few of these schools in detail and highlight several other colleges and universities that are serving Pell students quite well.

But even if all institutional-level gaps in completion between Pell and non-Pell students were eliminated, there would still be a considerable national gap because too many Pell students attend institutions where few students of any sort graduate, and too few attend institutions where most students graduate. The data and illustrations in this report suggest that underperforming institutions — rather than the Pell Grant program itself — deserve more scrutiny.

Beyond the analysis presented in this report, the Pell Grant graduation rates for all the schools in our sample are easily accessible on our website. These data may be useful to the following stakeholders:

- Prospective students from low-income and working-class families, who may want to know how students like them are faring at different colleges;
- Federal policymakers, who have inadequate information on how well (or how poorly) institutions are supporting students who receive Pell Grants or where to target resources for program improvement; and
- Campus presidents and administrators, who may be interested in improving graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients but lack the data needed to compare their outcomes with those of other peer institutions or to identify institutions from which they can learn.

As the Pell Grant program moves forward, more attention must be focused on institutional roles and responsibilities. That, together with adequate funds for the program, is our biggest lever for improving results.

Andrew Howard Nichols is director of higher education research and data analytics at The Education Trust.

NEW PELL DATA RELEASED

As this report was being finalized, the U.S. Department of Education released a new data set that includes Pell graduation rates. We are excited to dig into these data and will report what we learn. It is clear, however, that they have a number of significant limitations. The data are from the National Student Loan Data System, which was designed to track federal financial aid data, not student graduation rates. Currently, the NLSDS doesn't track completion outcomes for all Pell Grant recipients accurately. In addition, both full-time and part-time students are included in their graduation rate cohorts. And, most importantly, the data do not contain information on students who pay for college without federal financial aid, making it nearly impossible to analyze the Pell/non-Pell graduation rates we examine in this paper.

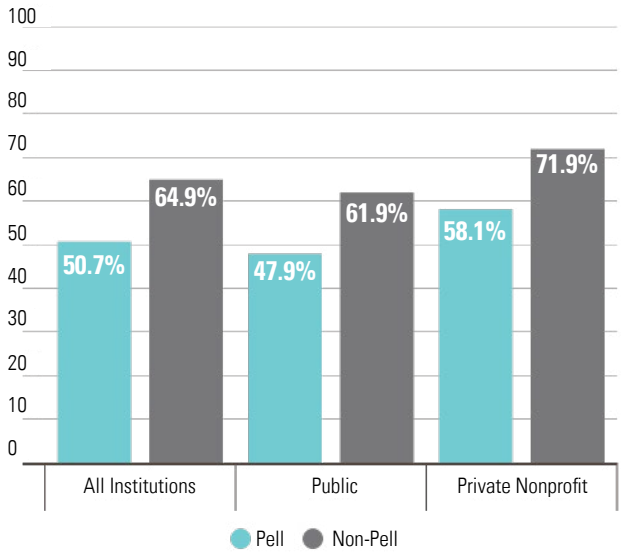
WHAT PELL GRAD RATES AND GAPS TELL US

The analysis in this report examines the national gap and institutional-level gaps in graduation rates between Pell and non-Pell Grant recipients at nearly 1,150 four-year, public and private nonprofit institutions across the nation. *(For details on the data used in this analysis, please see* Methods and Data Collection *on page 13.)*

The data show the national graduation rate for Pell Grant recipients attending institutions in our sample is considerably lower than the completion rate of non-Pell recipients *(Figure 1)*. While almost 65 percent of non-Pell recipients graduate in six years, only half of Pell students leave with a bachelor's degree in the same time frame.[5] This 14 percentage-point gap was nearly the same for both public and private nonprofit institutions, even though graduation rates at private institutions in the sample were higher.

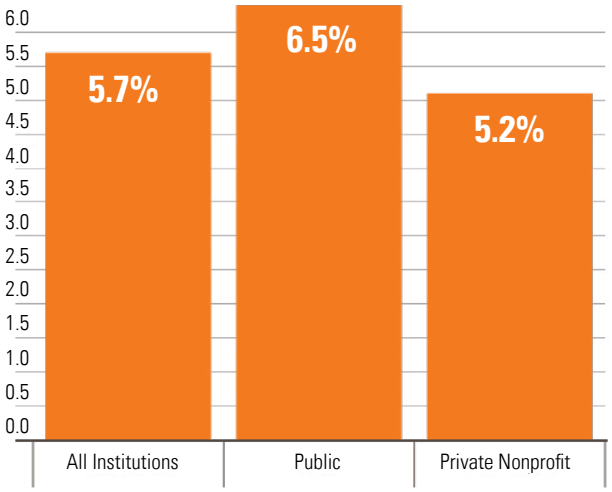
This 14-point gap between Pell and non-Pell students at the national level is much larger than the average gap between Pell and non-Pell students who attend the same institution *(Figure 2)*. That gap is only 5.7 percentage points (6.8 is the median). How is this possible? This occurs because the national gap is more than the product of all the individual completion gaps between Pell and non-Pell students at colleges and universities. The national gap is also a byproduct of which institutions students attend, with Pell students much more likely to attend institutions with lower graduation rates for all students, and much less likely to attend institutions that graduate most of their students.

Figure 1: 2013 Six-Year Bachelor's Degree Completion Rates



Notes: Analysis includes 1,149 institutions (505 public and 644 private nonprofit).
Source: The Education Trust's Pell Grant Graduation Rate Database

Figure 2: Average Institutional Completion Gap Between Pell and Non-Pell Students



Notes: Analysis includes 1,104 institutions (498 public and 606 private nonprofit). Only institutions with 30 Pell and non-Pell students were included in this analysis.
Source: The Education Trust's Pell Grant Graduation Rate Database

Completion Gaps

The completion gaps between Pell and non-Pell Grant recipients vary widely across institutions. Our findings show that 35 percent of the institutions in the sample are serving Pell recipients nearly as well as non-Pell recipients, meaning they either have no gaps in graduation rates or gaps that are 3 percentage points or less *(Figure 3)*. At the other end of the spectrum, a similar number of institutions — nearly 35 percent — have gaps that exceed 9 percentage points. Of these, more than half have gaps over twice the national average.

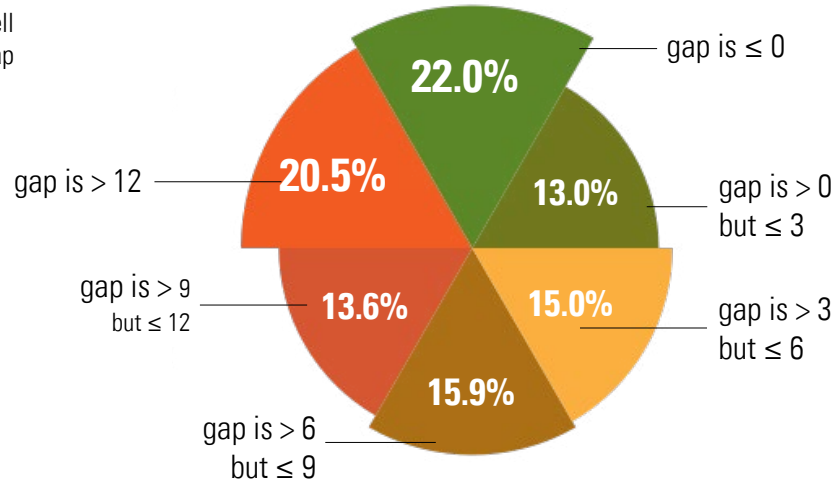
The institutions with considerable gaps in completion must do more to improve their outcomes for Pell Grant recipients. As the data show, there are hundreds of colleges successfully serving these students, even at rates that surpass non-Pell grant recipients. These institutions exist across a range of selectivity.

For example, Smith College and Western Oregon University are very different institutions, but at both campuses Pell Grant recipients graduate at higher rates than all students. These results didn't happen by chance. Both institutions used a range of support strategies, including changes to their admissions, financial aid, advising policies, and much more. *(See sidebars on Smith College and Western Oregon on pages 4 and 6.)*

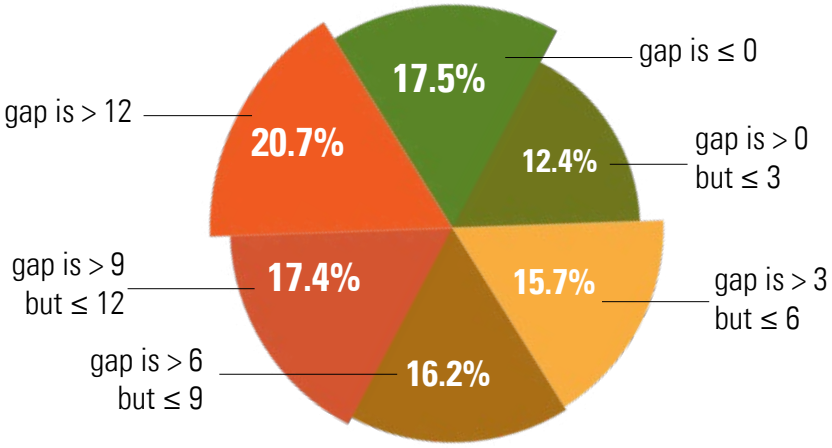
Unfortunately, closing institutional gaps in completion between Pell and non-Pell students is only part of the solution. Closing all the existing completion gaps at the colleges and universities in our sample would only reduce the 14 percentage-point national completion gap by half — 7 percentage points. The other 50 percent of the national gap is the result of where Pell and non-Pell students enroll (or don't enroll).

Figure 3:

Percent of Institutions by Pell/Non-Pell Completion Gap



Percent of Students at Institutions by Pell/Non-Pell Completion Gap



Notes: This analysis includes 1,079 institutions (473 public and 606 private nonprofit). Only institutions with 30 Pell and non-Pell students were included in this analysis. Institutions that submitted their data in the aggregate were not included. Source: The Education Trust's Pell Grant Graduation Rate Database

Photo Courtesy of Smith College

Smith College: A Culture That Shouts 'You Belong Here'

BY MANDY ZATYNSKI

Audrey Smith, vice president for enrollment at Smith College, greets every incoming class with the same message: "I want to tell you a secret about the admissions staff," she pauses and says confidently, "They never make a mistake."

And she's right — they rarely do. Ninety percent of Smith's Pell Grant recipients graduate in six years — some 40 percentage points higher than the national average (and overall, 86 percent of all students graduate, also far above the national average of 59 percent).[1] Smith credits the campus' admissions staff, who employ a holistic review for selecting students who demonstrate resilience and perseverance.

Eight years ago, the small private college in Northampton, Massachusetts, made SAT and ACT tests optional for admission, in part so students who weren't good test-takers — or those who didn't have access to preparation courses — wouldn't be deterred from applying. Instead, they pay close attention to teacher and counselor recommendations, and trained alumnae across the country interview prospective students in their hometowns. When admissions staff look at extracurricular activities, they note any work experience or care for siblings — things that may not sound as exciting as, say, the high school debate team, but are indicative of characteristics that will translate into success on campus. Smith College also partners with area high schools and community-based agencies, on which they rely for broader context about a prospective student when needed.

Each application includes a high school profile that summarizes any contextual information, including the college-going rate of that student's high school. So if, for example, the student has no Advanced Placement courses on her transcript, the admissions officer can also note that the high school didn't provide those courses. "We're looking very closely at experiences and measuring resilience," Smith said. In all, 21 percent of the college's incoming freshmen are Pell recipients.[2]

Attending Smith, however, isn't cheap. The college has a $41,000 price tag, which can make low-income students shy away. That's, in part, why the college pledges to meet the financial need of all its students. It estimates each student's budget, including tuition and room and board — but also textbooks and traveling to and from campus — and then determines how much the family can contribute. The difference is made up through a combination of a Smith grant, federal work-study, and loans. (Loans are capped each year for a total of $19,000 over four years.) The college also expects some financial contributions from a student's summer job, but for low-income students, that expectation is waived.

Once students are on campus, they can meet with residence hall staff, faculty advisers, and peer mentors who were either first-generation students themselves or have been trained to understand the unique challenges of being the first in your family to go to college. Advisers sometimes have to remind students, particularly those from low-income families,

Photo Courtesy of Smith College

that their job is to be a student, no matter what's going on at home. "We try very hard to put forward successful role models … who can authentically speak with students about the experience, about the challenges, and about the fact that they belong here," Smith said. "And I just can't overstate the importance of that."

Peer mentors have been particularly beneficial in connecting students to resources and support — financial or otherwise. "More entitled students know how to ask for these things," Smith said; low-income or first-generation students don't always. "It's making sure that they recognize that they are entitled … and [helping them to overcome] certain social reluctance." (Additionally, a recommendation to go see a mental health counselor is better received from a peer who's also been there than from a professor or faculty adviser.) They also steer students to extra funding that's available when textbooks or art supplies (if she is an art major, for example) exceed the estimate provided by the financial aid office. Majoring in music? The lessons are free. These types of funds are maintained by the college and Smith Student Aid Society, which is an endowed program that also pays for emergency medical visits or travel to professional conferences. For internships or job interviews, students are invited to stop by Suit Yourself, a lending closet on campus stocked with donated professional wear from Banana Republic. Students only pay the cost of dry-cleaning. "Again, it's about making it possible for students to access these opportunities," Smith said.

Peer mentoring also plays a crucial role in the campus' AEMES — or Achieving Excellence in Mathematics, Engineering and Science — program, which was designed after faculty saw that many students (particularly underrepresented minorities) weren't continuing in the science field after taking one of the gateway, or introductory, courses. AEMES pairs an upperclassman with a first-year student, and they work in the lab together and participate in other activities, like brown bag lunches. It's paid off in big ways: Students of color who participate in the program are much more likely (the likelihood ranges from 18 to 23 percentage points, depending on the major) to finish with a degree in the sciences.

"This commitment to ensuring students full access to every aspect of the Smith education has seeped across the institution," Smith said, "And that's what it takes."

NOTES

1. Smith College data comes from *College Results Online*. National averages come from the National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40
2. *College Results Online*.

Photo Courtesy of Western Oregon University

Western Oregon University: Advising for Success

BY MANDY ZATYNSKI

At Western Oregon University, a small public campus south of Portland, the mission to increase access isn't only about getting more low-income students on campus; it's about seeing them through to graduation. "Everything is about the fact we really want to make sure that when we open the door to a student, we really open it all the way through a diploma," said David McDonald, associate provost, who oversees admissions, financial aid, and student success. And at Western Oregon, Pell recipients graduate at the same rate as (and in 2013, even higher than) non-Pell recipients. "It's not good enough to just start this journey," McDonald added. "It's important that they finish this."

And so, over the last decade, institutional leaders have created policies and structures, from mandatory advising to fixed tuition, with low-income student success in mind. More than half of the students who come to campus are low-income, first-generation, or disabled, and so, university officials say, they invest a lot of energy into understanding the challenges students are facing and providing the services that are needed to support them.[1]

To start, all incoming students have the option to enroll in the Western Tuition Promise Program, which guarantees a fixed tuition rate for four years. That gives students, particularly those from low-income families, the ability to forecast expenses and plan accordingly. (Forty-seven percent of incoming freshmen are Pell Grant recipients.)[2] The university started the program in 2007 in the midst of dramatic tuition increases, upward of 12 percent in one year. The uncertainty of the increases — and exactly how high they'd go — created surprises for students that might have made them hesitant to apply or enroll, McDonald said. In order to fund the program, the university increased the reserve side of its budget, and about one-third of each incoming class now takes part. "There is an element of risk" for the university, McDonald admitted. "But any pricing policy or decision the campus makes carries with it a certain amount of risk." And officials see it as a worthwhile investment: Retention rates have increased by 4 percentage points — to 72 percent — and they hope it only continues to climb as more students participate.[3]

Another financial support for low-income students is the university's textbook rental program. After learning that students were opting to forgo textbooks because of their steep prices, officials created a rental option at the university bookstore that offers books at a reduced price — (this varies, but it's cheaper than if purchased used) — if students return them at the end of the term, unmarked and in good condition. It started four years ago, and about 40 percent of all textbooks now have the rental option. Officials estimate that it saves students $500,000 annually — and hopefully, far fewer students are forgoing textbooks because of price.

The "campuswide" gem, though, as McDonald calls it, is advising. Every student, regardless of major, must meet with an adviser each quarter; they can't register for classes until they do. But the purpose isn't solely for course-planning. "Sometimes these advising sessions are 10 percent 'What courses should I take?' and 90 percent all the other things that are happening in a student's life," McDonald said. And that can lead to early interventions and long-term relationships, which help when it

comes time to write letters of recommendation for internships and jobs. "These are important parts of keeping students connected to campus," McDonald says, "because when a student knows that they have adults and professionals who are here to help them — not just get through the class, but to really have a successful education here — it makes a difference."

For the past eight years, at least one adviser at Western Oregon has been recognized by the National Academic Advising Association as the best or an exemplar adviser in the nation.[4] (McDonald received the organization's premier Pacesetter award in 2011.) The university hires advising staff who bring bicultural and bilingual skills, and they are deliberate about their choices to hire faculty who also value student success, McDonald said.

Additional advising is provided through the federal TRIO program, specifically for low-income students. This is particularly helpful when students switch majors because they'll also likely change advisers. But in the TRIO program, advisers are consistent throughout a student's college career. TRIO also allows Western Oregon to provide free courses on study skills, financial literacy, and career planning. The classes don't cost students anything, but they earn elective credits toward their degree. Most of this is standard at many campuses across the country that also receive federal TRIO grants and provide similar programming. What's different at Western Oregon is that they reinvest back into the program TRIO funds that are allocated for indirect costs. (Usually 8 percent of the total grant, indirect costs are used for things like paper processing and payroll.) With additional institutional support, that exceeds $200,000 and allows the university to serve a total of 400 students — about 150 more than the TRIO grant itself funds. It's a small investment from the university that results in big gains for students — like many of the policies they've implemented over the last decade. "This type of success doesn't happen in a vacuum," McDonald said, "and it doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of intentional, sustained focus and efforts throughout the university."

NOTES

1. Phone interview with David McDonald and Marshall Guthrie.
2. *College Results Online*.
3. Phone interview with David McDonald and Marshall Guthrie.
4. http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events-Programs/Awards/Association-Awards.aspx

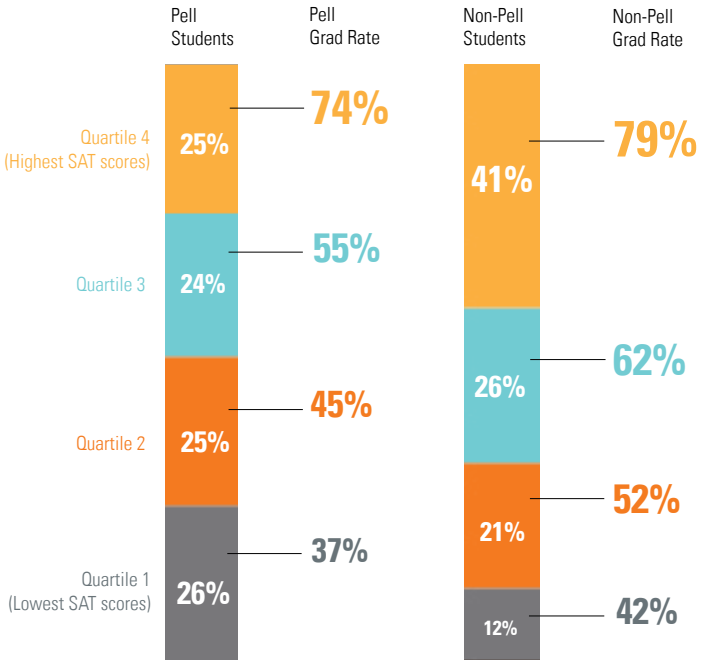
Enrollment Stratification

The often overlooked factor contributing to the national completion gap is the enrollment stratification of Pell and non-Pell students, meaning where Pell and non-Pell Grant recipients enroll. Figure 4 shows the Pell and non-Pell enrollment and graduation rates at institutions by SAT quartile — a measure closely correlated with overall student success rates. As is clear in the display, non-Pell students are much more likely to enroll at institutions with average SAT scores in the top two quartiles, where their chances of completing a degree are much higher.

Consider that very few non-Pell students — only 12 percent — attend institutions in the lowest SAT quartile (where graduation rates are lower), while double that percentage (26 percent) of Pell recipients do. Likewise, 41 percent of non-Pell students attend colleges and universities with SAT scores in the highest quartile (where graduation rates are higher) compared with just 25 percent of Pell students. The enrollment stratification of Pell and non-Pell students has an amplifying effect, creating the much larger national gap (14 percentage points).

If you look at these same data a bit differently in Figure 5, the effect of enrollment stratification becomes even more apparent. Roughly, the same number of institutions are included in each SAT quartile, but the colleges and universities that are more selective (have higher SAT scores) tend to have larger enrollments. But these selective colleges also have fewer

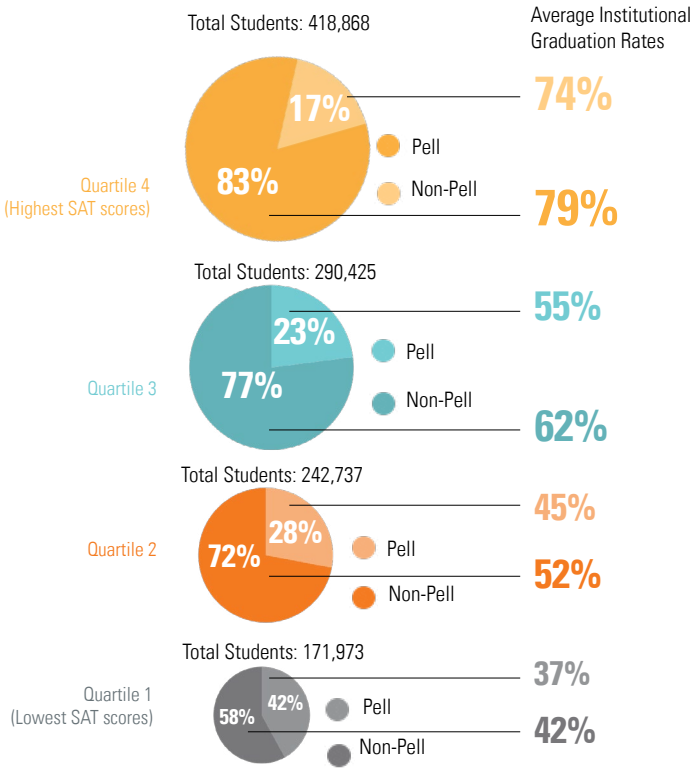
Figure 4: Enrollment and Graduation Rates at Institutions by SAT Quartile



Notes: Analysis includes 1,002 institutions. Only institutions with average SAT scores in *College Results Online* were included. The quartiles were: Q1) ≤ 990 (n=259), Q2) > 990 and ≤ 1055 (n=244), Q3) > 1055 and ≤ 1145 (n=255), Q4) > 1145 (n=244). Source: The Education Trust's Pell Grant Graduation Rate Database

Pell Grant recipients. Figure 5 shows the percent of Pell and non-Pell recipients within each SAT quartile. Nearly 83 percent of students attending institutions in the highest SAT quartile are non-Pell recipients, while just 17 percent are Pell recipients. This varies dramatically for the institutions in the lowest SAT quartile, where 42 percent of the students are Pell Grant recipients.[6]

Figure 5: Enrollment and Graduation Rates Within SAT Quartile



Notes: Analysis includes 1,002 institutions. Only institutions with average SAT scores in *College Results Online* were included. The quartiles were: Q1) ≤ 990 (n=259), Q2) > 990 and ≤ 1055 (n=244), Q3) > 1055 and ≤ 1145 (n=255), Q4) > 1145 (n=244) Source: The Education Trust's Pell Grant Graduation Rate Database

As mentioned earlier, if Pell Grant students graduated at similar rates as non-Pell students at all colleges that currently have gaps, this would cut the gap in half, reducing the 14 percentage-point national gap to 7. Closing the gap further requires both additional improvements in outcomes and changes in enrollment patterns. Less selective institutions with lower graduation rates need to improve their completion outcomes, and highly selective institutions need to create more seats for more Pell Grant recipients.

SIMILAR COLLEGES, DIFFERENT RESULTS

Throughout the years, The Education Trust's work has shown that institutions serving similar students can have wildly disparate outcomes, and the analysis of the Pell Grant graduation rate data reaffirms this. When we compare colleges and universities serving similar students, we see examples of similar institutions producing widely different results.

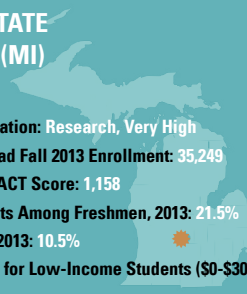
Take, for example, the University of Alabama and Michigan State University. Both are nationally known, fairly selective public research institutions with large student populations. But Michigan State has a 72 percent graduation rate for Pell Grant students, compared with 52 percent at the University of Alabama. It is fair to mention that the University of Alabama enrolls fewer undergraduates and has a higher percentage of underrepresented minority (URM) students than Michigan State University.[7] However, the 20 percentage-point difference in Pell graduation rates exists even though Michigan State serves a higher percentage of Pell Grant recipients and has students who enter with slightly lower SAT scores. It is also worth noting that Michigan State has an average $6,293 net price for low-income students, which is nearly one-third of what the University of Alabama charges students from families in the same tax bracket.

Or consider Lipscomb University and the University of Redlands. Besides being located in California and having a much larger percentage of URM students on campus, University of Redlands seems a lot like Lipscomb University on paper with one other obvious exception. Student outcomes at Lipscomb are much lower, particularly for Pell Grant recipients. Only 41 percent of Pell students complete a degree in six years at Lipscomb compared with 74 percent of Pell students at University of Redlands. This is hard to fathom given how much these institutions resemble one another. Both are in the same Carnegie Classification group and both enroll between 2,500 and 3,000 students. Moreover, about one-quarter of their entering students are Pell Grant recipients and perform about the same on their SAT examinations.

There are plenty more examples, including those listed on page 9, that provide evidence that institutional performance isn't simply a byproduct of the entering class institutions enroll. The decisions leaders make regarding curriculum, instruction, financial aid, and academic and social support services have a far-reaching impact on students, particularly those from low-income families.

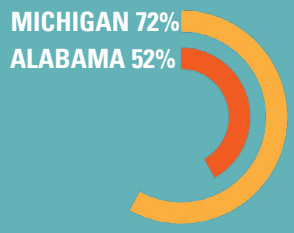
SIMILAR COLLEGES, DIFFERENT RESULTS – AN INSTITUTIONAL PEER COMPARISON

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY (MI)

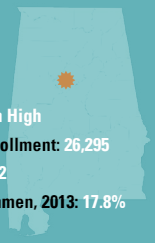


Public
Carnegie Classification: Research, Very High
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 35,249
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,158
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 21.5%
% URM Students, 2013: 10.5%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $6,293

6YR Pell Graduation Rate, 2013

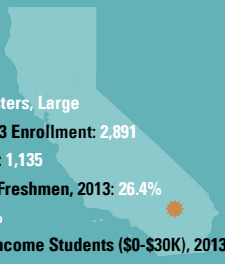


THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA (AL)



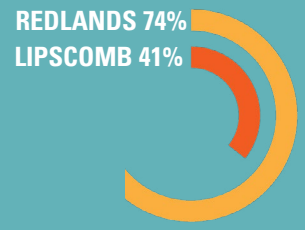
Public
Carnegie Classification: Research High
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 26,295
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,172
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 17.8%
% URM Students, 2013: 14.7%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $17,206

UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS (CA)



Private
Carnegie Classification: Masters, Large
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 2,891
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,135
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 26.4%
% URM Students, 2013: 27.4%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $19,403

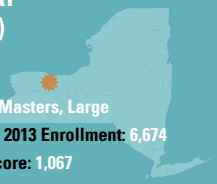
6YR Pell Graduation Rate, 2013



LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY (TN)

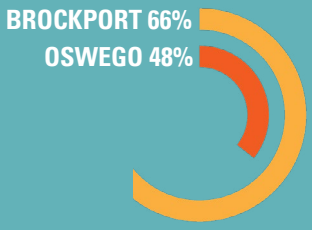
Private
Carnegie Classification: Masters, Large
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 2,574
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,140
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 25.7%
% URM Students, 2013: 11.2%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $17,931

SUNY COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT (NY)

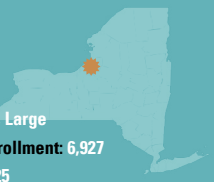


Public
Carnegie Classification: Masters, Large
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 6,674
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,067
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 37.9%
% URM Students, 2013: 11.3%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $8,389

6YR Pell Graduation Rate, 2013

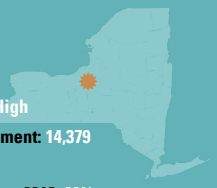


SUNY COLLEGE AT OSWEGO (NY)



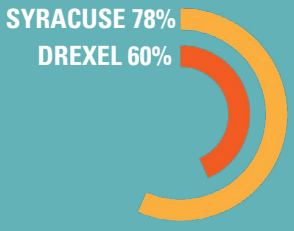
Public
Carnegie Classification: Masters, Large
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 6,927
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,125
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 39.7%
% URM Students, 2013: 13.1%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $9,951

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY (NY)



Private
Carnegie Classification: Research, High
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 14,379
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,161
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 26%
% URM Students, 2013: 19.1%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $18,699

6YR Pell Graduation Rate, 2013



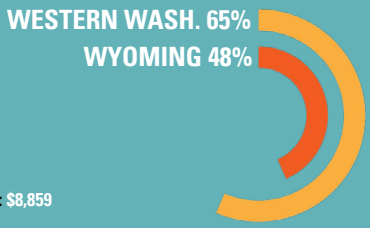
DREXEL UNIVERSITY (PA)

Private
Carnegie Classification: Research, High
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 14,007
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,216
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 17.7%
% URM Students, 2013: 11.5%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $24,908

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (WA)

Public
Carnegie Classification: Masters, Large
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 13,207
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,130
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 23.3%
% URM Students, 2013: 8.8%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $8,859

6YR Pell Graduation Rate, 2013



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING (WY)

Public
Carnegie Classification: Research, High
Full-Time Undergrad Fall 2013 Enrollment: 8,939
2013 Median SAT/ACT Score: 1,122
% of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013: 20.2%
% URM Students, 2013: 7.1%
Average Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-$30K), 2013: $8,336

Table 1 includes a list of 36 institutions that have Pell graduation rates that are 10 percentage points above the average rate of their peers (according to *College Results Online*). They also have:

- Pell Grant graduation rates at or above the national Pell graduation rate (50 percent);
- Completion gaps between Pell and non-Pell recipients at or below 3 percentage points; and
- At least 150 first-time, full-time Pell recipients and 50 non-Pell Grant recipients in their graduation rate cohort.

Institutions are ordered according to the net price low-income students are asked to pay.[8]

Table 1: Standout Institutions for Graduation of Pell Students

Institution	State	Institutional Control	2013 Pell Grad Rate	2013 Pell/Non-Pell Completion Gap	Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen, 2013	Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0–$30k)
CUNY Queens College	NY	Public	58%	-2%	46%	$ 3,538
California State University-Stanislaus	CA	Public	53%	-1%	60%	$ 4,711
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College	NY	Public	69%	-4%	46%	$ 5,148
University of Michigan-Dearborn	MI	Public	56%	-6%	42%	$ 6,386
University of South Florida	FL	Public	62%	2%	42%	$ 6,688
University of California-Riverside	CA	Public	68%	-3%	56%	$ 7,651
University of California-Irvine	CA	Public	87%	-1%	48%	$ 8,096
SUNY College at Brockport	NY	Public	66%	1%	38%	$ 8,389
The Evergreen State College	WA	Public	60%	-3%	32%	$ 8,687
Fitchburg State College	MA	Public	53%	-3%	38%	$ 8,845
Saint Joseph's College-Main Campus	NY	Private nonprofit	71%	1%	34%	$ 9,342
University of California-Santa Barbara	CA	Public	79%	3%	41%	$ 9,546
University of Massachusetts-Lowell	MA	Public	52%	3%	30%	$ 9,978
University of California-Santa Cruz	CA	Public	71%	2%	51%	$ 9,989
SUNY at Albany	NY	Public	67%	-1%	36%	$ 10,032
Central Michigan University	MI	Public	60%	-2%	35%	$ 10,107
Southern Connecticut State University	CT	Public	51%	-3%	33%	$ 11,967
Winona State University	MN	Public	65%	-13%	25%	$ 12,048
Framingham State College	MA	Public	56%	-8%	30%	$ 12,054
South Dakota State University	SD	Public	56%	1%	30%	$ 12,199
George Mason University	VA	Public	68%	-4%	24%	$ 13,249
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey	NJ	Public	66%	0%	32%	$ 13,754
California University of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	51%	3%	38%	$ 14,454
Western Illinois University	IL	Public	56%	0%	43%	$ 14,583
John Carroll University	OH	Private nonprofit	75%	0%	26%	$ 14,645
Western Oregon University	OR	Public	50%	-9%	47%	$ 15,105
Plymouth State University	NH	Public	60%	-5%	31%	$ 15,211
Millikin University	IL	Private nonprofit	60%	-1%	39%	$ 15,405
Clarkson University	NY	Private nonprofit	75%	-3%	29%	$ 15,746
Temple University	PA	Public	66%	0%	27%	$ 16,759
Manhattan College	NY	Private nonprofit	75%	-1%	31%	$ 19,067
Duquesne University	PA	Private nonprofit	76%	0%	20%	$ 19,166
Rowan University	NJ	Public	70%	0%	30%	$ 20,837
California Baptist University	CA	Private nonprofit	63%	-7%	46%	$ 20,886
DePaul University	IL	Private nonprofit	69%	2%	28%	$ 22,442
Southern New Hampshire University	NH	Private nonprofit	61%	-9%	38%	$ 30,269

WHY WE NEED ANNUAL PELL DATA

Beyond making the Pell Grant graduation rates for nearly 1,150 institutions freely available to the public, the analysis in this report provides three major takeaways that should be noted by students, policymakers, and institutional leaders.

- At the typical four-year public and private nonprofit college in our sample, the completion gap between Pell and non-Pell students was just 5.7 percentage points. That's actually remarkable, given the challenges low-income students face throughout the pre-K-16 pipeline. The combination of these institutional gaps along with enrollment stratification expands this gap to 14 percentage points at the national level. However, this disparity does not suggest that Pell is an ineffective program or a bad financial investment. The program is a necessary part of a national strategy to increase the number of college-educated adults; better results for Pell students can be achieved with more aggressive and comprehensive interventions that sufficiently address affordability and college readiness. If the program didn't exist, thousands of low-income students would lose access to higher education and never complete a degree, a terrible waste of talent that our country cannot afford.
- Fifty percent of the national completion gap is the cumulative effect of institutional gaps in graduation rates between Pell and non-Pell Grant recipients; the rest is the result of enrollment stratification. If we are to achieve equitable outcomes for Pell Grant recipients, the conversation must extend beyond institutional gaps in completion and include discussions about which students institutions choose to enroll. There are too many selective institutions that are not enrolling enough students from low-income and working-class backgrounds. As we advocate in our *Tough Love* report, which outlines minimum performance standards for colleges on access, affordability, and success, the federal government must take active steps to ensure these institutions enroll their fair share of Pell Grant recipients.[9]
- Nearly 35 percent of institutions have gaps in graduation rates that exceed 9 percentage points, while 35 percent of institutions had small gaps or Pell students that graduate at equal or better rates than non-Pell Grant recipients. The data and stories from institutions that are serving students well provide promise and proof that institutions can achieve equity — if leaders make completion and equity a top priority.

Without the collection and publication of these data, we do not have a clear understanding of the performance and ultimate success of Pell Grant students. Because the federal government is making a significant investment by disseminating these grants to students who need them most, it should ensure there is follow-through from institutions to provide the additional supports and resources these students need. The federal government can do this by requiring colleges and universities to report this data annually and by acting when institutions don't perform.

Leaving students in the dark benefits no one. Pell Grant graduation data should be an important factor in any low-income student's decision about college. They can better identify institutions that provide the supports and resources to help them through to graduation. But the burden shouldn't just be on students. Policymakers can augment and incentivize that support by acting when institutions don't perform. If we are to improve degree completion and get a better return on the investment in Pell Grants, both actors need take results seriously. ■

THE PELL DATA VOID

Every year, institutions that receive Title IV funds are required to report graduation rate data to the federal government on a cohort of students. These colleges must disaggregate these data by gender and race or ethnicity, but not by income – specifically receipt of a federal Pell grant. Providing these data would be an easy lift, and many institutions voluntarily provide it to some for-profit and nonprofit organizations each year. There is no reason why this information shouldn't be readily available to policymakers and, especially, students.

Currently, the government is hoping that students interested in this information can take advantage of provisions contained in the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act reauthorization that require institutions to disclose, only upon request, their Pell graduation rates to prospective and current students. Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be working. Research on this provision suggests this disclosure requirement is often misunderstood and largely ignored by institutions. In a survey administered by Education Sector and the American Enterprise Institute in 2011, 75 percent of 150 colleges were unable or unwilling to provide the graduation rates of Pell Grant recipients, leaving students completely in the dark.[1]

Certainly, the new NSLDS data recently released by the Department of Education help. But they are not a substitute for integrating Pell status into regular IPEDS data collections.

NOTES

1. Kevin Carey and Andrew P. Kelly, *The Truth Behind Higher Education Disclosure Laws* (Washington, D.C.: Education Sector and American Enterprise Institute, 2011), http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/-truthhighereddisclosurelaws_185621335060.pdf

NOTES

1. 2013-2014 Federal Pell Grant Program End-of-Year Report. U.S. Department of Education. Office of Postsecondary Education.
2. 2013-2014 Federal Pell Grant Program End-of-Year Report. U.S. Department of Education. Office of Postsecondary Education.
3. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2001 and Spring 2007 through Spring 2014, Graduation Rates component. (This table was prepared November 2014.)
4. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS:04/09).
5. The graduation rates used in this brief are based on the federal government's definition of a six-year graduation rate. The graduation rate cohort (denominator) includes Pell and non-Pell Grant recipients, who were first-time, full-time students in fall 2007. Graduates (numerator) are those who completed a bachelor's degree by August 31, 2013. These rates in this brief do not include students who transfer from their first institution and complete a degree elsewhere.
6. Only institutions that reported SAT scores and submitted Pell Grant data were included (n = 1008). These figures likely understate the degree of enrollment stratification since institutions that aren't very selective are typically less likely to report their SAT scores and have an above average percentage of Pell Grant students.
7. Underrepresented students included black, Latino, and Native American undergraduates
8. Low-income is defined as students from families making less than $30,000.
9. More details on our *Tough Love* accountability framework for college access, affordability, and success can be found in Michael Dannenberg and Mary Nguyen Barry, *Tough Love: Bottom-Line Quality Standards for Colleges* (Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust, 2014), http://edtrust.org/resource/tough-love-bottom-line-quality-standards-for-colleges/

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

The data discussed in this report — and available on The Education Trust's website (www.edtrust.org/resource/pellgradrates) — were gathered through a yearlong data collection effort. Data were collected from four primary sources:

- State higher education systems and coordinating bodies,
- Colleges and universities across the nation,
- *U.S. News and World Report*, and
- The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Since the federal government doesn't require institutions to report graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients, there are no federally defined standards that detail how a Pell graduation cohort should be identified. For this report, we asked colleges to report the six-year graduation rates for students that received Pell Grants that were in their first-time, full-time IPEDS graduation rate cohorts. More details on the specific definition can be found in *Appendix A*.

The data collection plan consisted of three distinct strategies. First, data collection templates were sent to the chief executive officers of the National Association of System Heads and various other higher education state systems and coordinating agencies.

These collection templates asked for each system to report:

- The number of first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students that received a Pell Grant in the 2005, 2006, and 2007 entry cohort for each institution with an IPEDS ID in their system, and
- The number of those students in each cohort that received a bachelor's degree within six years for each institution in their system.

These respondents were asked to identify Pell Grant recipients and graduates from the same cohort used in their IPEDS submissions. Systems were also provided the option to report similar data for the entire 2005, 2006, and 2007 first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking cohort. The instructions on the template indicated that this information would be downloaded from IPEDS if it were not provided.

The components (i.e., numerator and denominator) of the Pell graduation rate and the institution's overall graduation rate were used to construct the graduation rate for the non-Pell Grant students at those institutions. This calculation enabled us to compare the completion gaps between the Pell and non-Pell recipient groups at each campus.

Second, Pell Grant graduation rate data for many institutions were licensed from *U.S. News and World Report*. The *U.S. News* data set allowed us to acquire Pell graduation rate data for many institutions, specifically private institutions that were not included in the collection from the systems and coordinating agencies. Also included in the *U.S. News* data set were data for institutions whose information we had already collected from the systems and coordinating agencies. As a data quality assurance measure, we compared these figures and made attempts to reconcile any data discrepancies. If we couldn't reconcile the discrepancies, we relied on the data provided directly to us by the systems or coordinating bodies. Again, we combined the *U.S. News* data with the IPEDS graduation rate data to construct a completion rate for the non-Pell Grant students, which was used to assess gaps in completion at each campus.

Third, an electronic survey was sent directly to college and university presidents and/or the chief data administrators for institutions whose data had not been obtained from systems and coordinating agencies or through *U.S. News*. The survey asked institutions to report the same data that was requested from the systems and coordinating agencies using the collection template previously mentioned. If institutions did not provide data for their overall graduation rate cohort, it was gathered from IPEDS in order to construct the non-Pell graduation rate.

The collection efforts allowed us to acquire Pell Grant graduation rate data for 1,149 of the 1,500 public and private nonprofit colleges and universities that were targeted.[1] The 1,500 institutions in *College Results Online* database that fit the following criteria constituted the target population of institutions for this project:[2]

- Four-year public or private nonprofit,
- Title IV, bachelor's degree-granting,
- Located in the 50 states or Washington D.C.,
- Active in the 2007-08 and 2012-13 academic terms,
- Reported a 2012-13 graduation rate in IPEDS, and
- Enrolled first-time, full-time undergraduates in fall 2007 and fall 2012.

These 1,500 institutions represent roughly 85 percent of the 2007-08 degree-seeking Pell recipient cohort at all public and private nonprofit Title IV-receiving institutions in the 50 states and Washington D.C. As shown in Table 1, the sample of 1,149 institutions closely represents the 1,500 institutions we hoped to include in the study. We acquired data from 76 percent of the institutions we surveyed, with a higher representation of public institutions in the sample. Private institutions are underrepresented in our sample, and institutions that shared their data with us tended to be slightly larger and more selective than the population of institutions we surveyed. This should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Limitations

Although our study is fairly comprehensive, it does not included private for-profit colleges. Data from for-profit institutions were excluded for two reasons. First, we thought it would be difficult to entice for-profits to provide us with their data, given their subpar track record on student success.[3] According to data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study, the bachelor's degree completion

rates for Pell Grant recipients at four-year, for-profit institutions is roughly 14 percent.[4] Second, for-profit enrollments are declining and they serve much fewer first-time, full-time students than they did several years ago.[5] While for-profit institutions enrolled one-fifth of all first-time, full-time Pell Grant recipients in 2007-08, these institutions only enrolled 11 percent of these students in 2012-13.[6] Much of this decline may be the result of the negative attention and scrutiny bad actors in this sector have received and the expansion of employment opportunities brought on by the nation's economic recovery. If we commit to gathering Pell Grant data again in the future, Ed Trust hopes to incorporate for-profit institutions in the collection.

Table 1: Target Population and Sample Descriptors

	Target Population	Sample	Sample as a Percentage of the Population
Total Institutions	1,500	1,149	76%
Public Institutions	561	505	90%
Private Nonprofit Institutions	939	644	68%
Average SAT	1,064	1,078	N/A
Average Undergraduate FTE	4,903	5,714	N/A
Total Pell $ Received (2007/08)	$6,078,370,312	$5,210,978,802	86%
# FTFT Pell Recipients (2007/08)	360,135	301,304	84%
Total FTE Undergrads(2012/13)	7,350,194	6,417,303	87%
# FTFT Students (2012/13)	1,373,509	1,209,620	88%
# FTFT URM Students (2012/13)	332,343	285,671	86%

Note: Full-time equivalent (FTE); first-time, first-time (FTFT); Underrepresented minority (URM)

Another limitation of this study involves the method we used to calculate the completion gap between Pell and non-Pell students at some institutions. For some colleges, we had to use the Pell Grant graduation rate data licensed from *U.S News and World Report* and the overall graduation rate data downloaded from IPEDS to calculate the completion gap. Using two different data sources is not ideal, but the data definitions used by *U.S News and World Report* are based on the Common Data Set, which are identical to the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey definitions. In most cases, the overall graduation rate cohort reported to *U.S. News and World Report* and IPEDS should be very close. However, there could be small discrepancies because the data was submitted at different times, as data are often updated and modified to reflect changes in student records.

To assess the extent of this problem, data quality checks were conducted. For each institution, we were able to calculate a percent of Pell Grant recipients among first-time, full-time students using both sources and compare that data point to the IPEDS data that was submitted by each institution for the percent of Pell Grant recipients among first-time, full-time students in the financial aid cohort. In some cases, this information matched identically or was off a negligible amount. However, in some cases this was off considerably, calling into question the accuracy of self-reported data. Ideally we would have licensed overall graduation rate date that was submitted to *U.S. News and World Report* by the institutions, but our budget limitations eliminated this option.

NOTES

1. A few higher education systems and coordinating agencies submitted aggregated data that included information for multiple campuses. Although Pell Grant graduation rate data representing 1,149 institutions were collected, only 1,124 separate submissions that could be linked to unique IPEDS identification numbers were received.
2. Carnegie special institutions (2010) — such as medical schools and medical centers; other health profession schools; schools of engineering; schools of art, music, and design; schools of law; other special-focus institutions; and theological schools — were excluded from the study.
3. Mamie Lynch, Jennifer Engle and José L. Cruz, *Subprime Opportunity: The Unfulfilled Promise of For-Profit Colleges and Universities* (Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust, 2010), http://edtrust.org/resource/subprime-opportunity-the-unfulfilled-promise-of-for-profit-colleges-and-universities/
4. Ed Trust analysis of U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS:04/09).
5. Doug Lederman, "The Shrinking Sector," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 24, 2015, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/07/24/number-profit-colleges-declines-enrollments-wither
6. IPEDS, Student Financial Aid component, 2007-08 and 2012-13

APPENDIX A

Pell Grant Graduation Rate

Number of Pell Grant Recipients in Cohort: The number of first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students receiving Pell Grants at entry. Include all Pell Grant recipients that enrolled in at least 12 units/credits of college coursework (full-time) with no prior postsecondary experience (first-time) that were seeking a bachelor's degree. Pell Grant recipients who begin as part-time students, were not seeking a bachelor's degree, or who transfer into the institution should not be included. You may also exclude Pell Grant recipients from the cohort that: a) left school to serve in the armed forces, b) left school to service with foreign aid services of the federal government, c) left school to serve on an official church mission, or d) died or became permanently disabled.

Number of Pell Grant Recipients Graduated within 6 years: The number of students in the first-time, full-time Pell Grant (at entry) recipient cohort who earned a bachelor's or equivalent degree from the institution where they originally enrolled within 6 years.

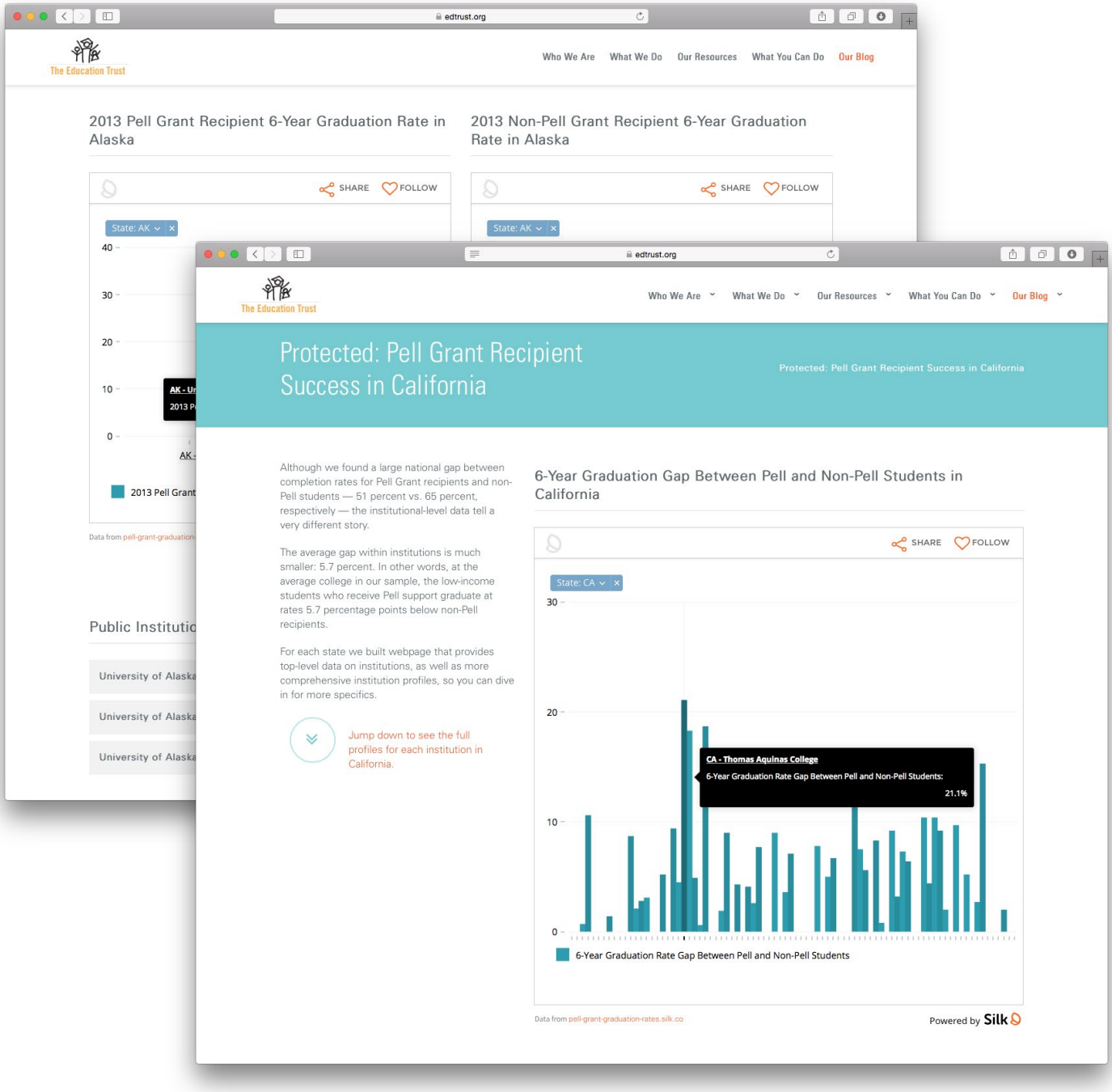
Overall Institution Graduation Rate

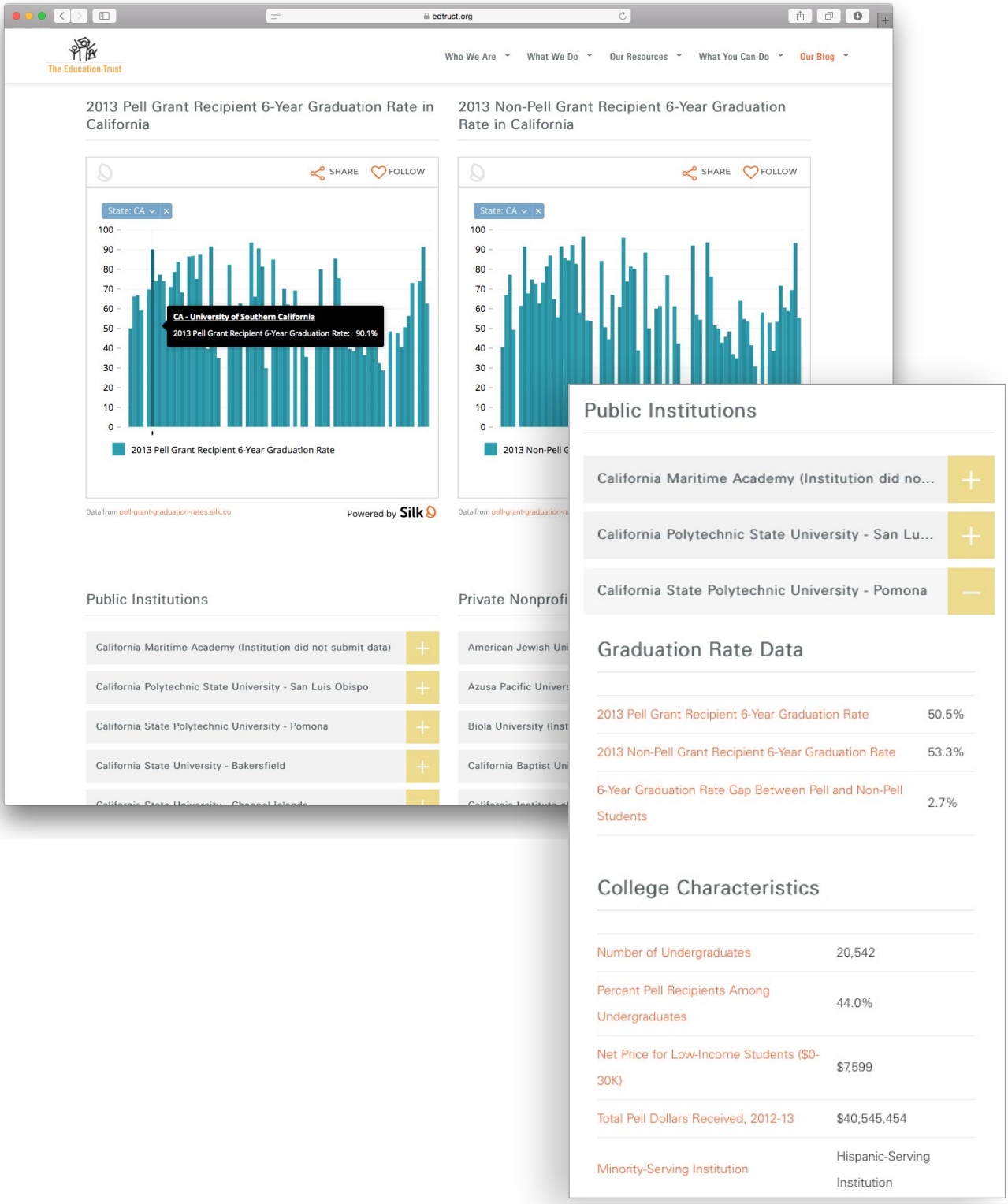
Number of Students in Cohort: The number of first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students. This includes all students enrolled in at least 12 unit/credits of college coursework with no prior postsecondary experience who are seeking a bachelor's degree. Undergraduates who begin as part-time students, were not seeking a bachelor's degree, or who transfer into the institution should not be included. You may also exclude students from the cohort that: a) left school to serve in the armed forces, b) left school to service with foreign aid services of the federal government, c) left school to serve on an official church mission, or d) died or became permanently disabled.

Number of Completers in 6 years: The number of students in the first-time, full-time cohort who earned a bachelor's or equivalent degree from the institution where they originally enrolled within 6 years.

Pell Graduation Rate Data Tool

Interested in knowing which four-year colleges and universities fare well for low-income students? Our Institution Profile is just the tool you need. Here you'll find graduation rates for Pell and non-Pell Grant recipients at nearly 1,150 institutions, the percentage of Pell Grant recipients attending each school, the cost for each, and much, much, more. This database provides useful information that policymakers, researchers, and students won't find anywhere else.

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The Education Trust
Who We Are
What We Do
Our Resources
What You Can Do
Our Blog
2013 Pell Grant Recipient 6-Year Graduation Rate in California
2013 Non-Pell Grant Recipient 6-Year Graduation Rate in California
SHARE
FOLLOW
State: CA
CA - University of Southern California
2013 Pell Grant Recipient 6-Year Graduation Rate: 90.1%
2013 Pell Grant Recipient 6-Year Graduation Rate
Data from pell-grant-graduation-rates.silk.co
Powered by Silk
Public Institutions
California Maritime Academy (Institution did not submit data)
California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo
California State Polytechnic University - Pomona
California State University - Bakersfield
Private Nonprofi
American Jewish Uni
Azusa Pacific Univers
Biola University (Inst
California Baptist Uni
Public Institutions
California Maritime Academy (Institution did no...
California Polytechnic State University - San Lu...
California State Polytechnic University - Pomona
Graduation Rate Data
2013 Pell Grant Recipient 6-Year Graduation Rate 50.5%
2013 Non-Pell Grant Recipient 6-Year Graduation Rate 53.3%
6-Year Graduation Rate Gap Between Pell and Non-Pell Students 2.7%
College Characteristics
Number of Undergraduates 20,542
Percent Pell Recipients Among Undergraduates 44.0%
Net Price for Low-Income Students ($0-30K) $7,599
Total Pell Dollars Received, 2012-13 $40,545,454
Minority-Serving Institution Hispanic-Serving Institution

ABOUT THE EDUCATION TRUST

The Education Trust promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels — pre-kindergarten through college. We work alongside parents, educators, and community and business leaders across the country in transforming schools and colleges into institutions that serve all students well. Lessons learned in these efforts, together with unflinching data analyses, shape our state and national policy agendas. Our goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign far too many young people — especially those who are black, Latino, American Indian, or from low-income families — to lives on the margins of the American mainstream.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is one component of a larger consortium effort exploring student-friendly federal education policy solutions in higher education. The Education Trust would like to graciously thank our consortia partners, the National College Access Network and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, for their guidance, support, and feedback throughout this project. We are also grateful to all postsecondary institutions, systems of higher education, and coordinating agencies that provided their data. Additionally, we would like to thank Rebecca Martin and the National Association of System Heads for their assistance during data collection. Special thanks to Gingle Lee, Tykeia Robinson, Nicole Brown, and Manuel Contreras for their research assistance.

Finally, special appreciation goes to Jessica Taketa for her dedication and hard work on the extensive data collection and cleaning required for this project.

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The Education Trust

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