Facing Change: How Can Higher Education Adapt and Move Forward in our Midwest Region

Nathan D. Grawe | Carleton College
Challenges We Face
Year When Non-Hispanic Whites Become Minority

- Tipping-point year around mid-century
- Younger generations are more diverse
- Those under 18 have already passed tipping-point year
- Those of traditional college-going age reach tipping point in next decade.

Source: William H Frey analysis of U.S. Census population projections released March 13, 2018 and revised September 6, 2018
Total Fertility Rate per 1000 Women, 2007

Source: National Vital Statistics Reports Vol. 58, no. 24
A History of US Births

In 2020, births reached a 40-year low.

Number of Births, 1975-2021

Source: National Vital Statistics Reports, various years
Consequence of Fertility Decline
Cumulative total: 8.6 million delayed or foregone births

Source: Kenneth M. Johnson (2021)
Total Fertility Rate per 1000 Women, 2021

TFR Relative to Replacement

- <80%
- 80% to 85%
- 85% to 90%
- 90% to 95%
- 95% to 100%
- 100% to 105%
- 105% to 110%
- >110%

Source: National Vital Statistics Reports Vol. 72, no. 1
We’ve entered a new age.

“Until just a few years ago, colleges could anticipate classes of high-school graduates each bigger than the last.... But those days are over.”

Sara Lipka,
*Chronicle of Higher Education* (2014)
Projected Number of College-Going Students Relative to 2018, by Region

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the American Community Survey (2017), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Vital Statistics Reports (2018, 67(7)), 2009 High School Longitudinal Study (restricted and unrestricted), and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (2011; 2015)
Race/Ethnicity Distribution of College-Going Students, 2018/19 and 2033/34

Source: Author’s calculations based on data from the American Community Survey (2017), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Vital Statistics Reports (2018, 67(7)), 2009 High School Longitudinal Study (restricted and unrestricted), and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (2011; 2015)
Real Hourly Wages, Relative to January 2020

Wage compression → declining return to college degree

Source: Autor, Dube, and McGrew 2023
Cultural Trends
Evidence of higher ed’s exceptional ROI is questioned.

Share of Americans saying colleges and universities have a ___ effect on the way things are going in the country

Source: Pew (2019)
Postsecondary Enrollment among HS Graduates (3-Year Average), 1975-2021

Declines pre-date COVID

Source: Digest of Education Statistics (n.d.)
Higher Education Responds
Approaching Examples from Others
Importance of mission/context & accountability
New International Student Enrollments 2007/08-2021/22

Evidence of increased competition

Source: Institute of International Education (2022)
Preparing for a Turn to New Student Groups

“Unless we have had professional development along the way that invites us to think about equity work, a lot of educators are caught within the questions ‘Why aren’t you bringing me the right students? What is wrong with students today?’… Unless you are deeply reflective institutionally, you don’t go to question [ingrained practices].”

Pam Eddinger
President, Bunker Hill Community College
Reconsidering Self-Identity
Separating core mission from sacred cows

New John Dee Bright College at Drake University to Offer Two-Year Degrees

September 1, 2020
Attention to Student Success
Academic Programming

From College to Life: Relevance and the Value of Higher Education
May 2018

- Relevance strongly predicts value and quality. The more relevant people find their courses to be to their work and daily lives, the greater their belief that they received a high-quality education and that it was worth the cost. Compared with those who strongly disagree, consumers who strongly agree that the courses they took are relevant to their careers and lives are:
  - 63 percentage points more likely to strongly agree that their education was worth the cost.
  - 50 percentage points more likely to strongly agree that they received a high-quality education.
Collaboration
Shared mental health providers

MCC, UNO, UNMC Announce Network to Improve Student Success
Collaboration
System collaboration
A Constructive Metaphor

“Antifragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better.”
Thank You

Nathan D. Grawe | Carleton College
Data Sources


Panel Study of Income Dynamics, public use dataset. Produced and distributed by the Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 2019.


