



VERMONT HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL

2017 State of Higher Education in Vermont Report

Executive Summary

Click [here](#) for the full report.

The Vermont Higher Education Council is pleased to announce the release of a comprehensive report on the state of higher education in Vermont, including institutional characteristics, enrollment statistics, special programs, and outcomes. The report is designed to provide general information for the public as well as for legislators, community partners, and researchers. It also serves as a baseline for future data collection and a mechanism to share information among member campuses.

Data is drawn primarily from the national Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for the most recent year in which final data is available (2014-2015 academic year). All data has been aggregated for all Vermont-Chartered higher education institutions.

This executive summary provides key highlights from each major section of the report.

Types of Degrees:

Among the data presented are statistics on the types and levels of degrees offered in Vermont as well as the most frequent degree fields at the undergraduate and graduate levels. STEM degrees are represented in the top ten degree fields at each level, and 30% of bachelor's degrees awarded in Vermont were in STEM fields. This data also is compared with the recently released "[Pathways to a Promising Careers](#)" publication by the McClure Foundation, and demonstrates that approximately 52% of undergraduate degrees and 57% of graduate degrees were awarded in fields connected to the pathways in this publication.

Distance and online education is also a growing field in Vermont. More than half of Vermont campuses offered distance education at the undergraduate or graduate level in 2014-2015, with more than 5,000 students enrolled exclusively online.

Student Enrollment:

In 2014-2015 there were over 44,000 students enrolled in some level of study in Vermont. The report breaks down student enrollment in terms of level (undergraduate vs. graduate), type of college, residency, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Overall, Vermont State Colleges and The University of Vermont each served about 28% of the total number of students, and Independent Colleges served 44%. Of the total number of students, 42% were Vermont resident and 62% of those students were enrolled at Vermont State Colleges.

Vermont colleges mirrored national trends in which women outnumber men at both the undergraduate (53%) and graduate (60%) levels. Our higher education institutions remain predominantly white, but the student population is more diverse than the overall population in Vermont. In terms of socioeconomic status, 29% of first-time undergraduates in this report were Pell-Eligible (denoting low income status), and the Vermont State Colleges served the highest percentage of Pell-Eligible students as a proportion of population (47%).

Cost & Financial Aid:

In 2014-2015 the average total cost of attendance (including tuition, fees, room, board, and transportation) in Vermont was over \$40,000 per year. However, approximately 87% of the first-time first-year students in 2014-2015 received some type of federal, state, or institutional financial aid. The highest percentage of grant aid actually comes from institutions themselves. After taking grant and scholarship aid into account, the average net price for students decreased to below \$20,000. This price remained relatively level for three academic years in a row.

The report also highlights efforts made by campuses and cross-campus initiatives to increase access to higher education for low-income Vermonters and other underrepresented students. These efforts include academic credit initiatives like dual enrollment (offered by 19 institutions in 2014-2015), military and veterans' services (offered at some level by all institutions), and K-12 mentoring initiatives.

Outcomes:

The average weighted retention rate for full-time students in Vermont is 80% (i.e. 80% of first year students are retained into a second year). These rates are higher than national rates reported by The [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#) which indicated that approximately 60% of students were retained at the same institution, and 72% were retained at any institution for the same cohort. Vermont retention rates were highest at The University of Vermont (87%), followed closely by the Independent Colleges (86%).

The six-year graduation rates in Vermont averaged across all institutions was at about 62%. According to the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#), Vermont places sixth in the nation for graduation rates within six years at public colleges.

A survey by the [National Association of College and Employers \(NACE\)](#) indicates that 63% of Vermont graduates (class of 2015) were employed full-time within a year of graduation, and 17% of them were continuing their education.

Human Resources & Economic Impact:

Vermont higher education institutions employ approximately 11,000 individuals and pay more than \$550 Million in total wages; approximately 53% of these wages go to faculty and 47% go to staff. Of those employees, approximately 45% are men and 55% are women (with more men in faculty position and more women in staff positions). VHEC is tracking tenure status and salary by gender and will be pursuing further research in the future on these topics in partnership with Change the Story VT.