

A stronger nation through higher education — and Utah's role in that effort

In Utah, 40 percent of the state's 1.3 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a two-year degree, according to 2008 Census data. This compares to a national average of around 38 percent.

— representing nearly 28 percent of the state's adult population. If only a small portion of this group could be enticed to return to college to complete either a two- or four-year degree, it would go a long way to helping Utah reach the goal of 60 percent higher education attainment.

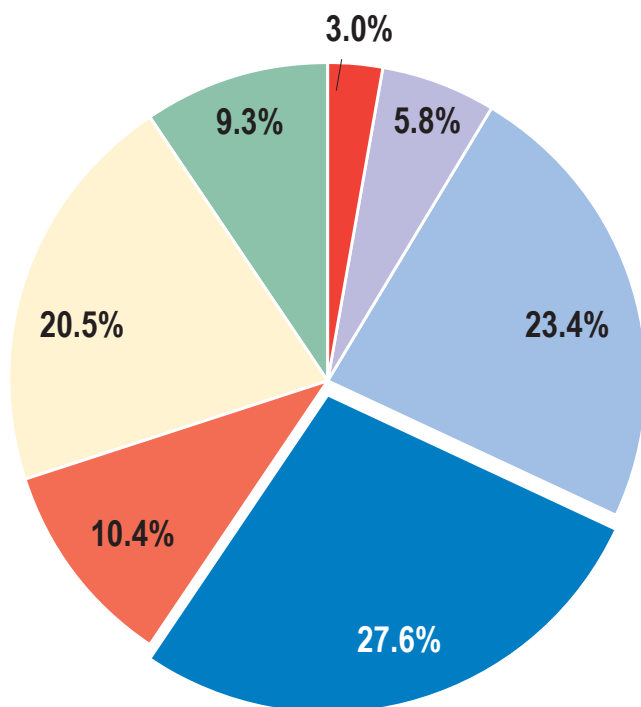
Attainment rates in Utah are increasing modestly, even though the proportion of degree-holding young adults — those 25-34 years old — mirrors that of the overall adult population. If Utah continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have a college-attainment rate of 48.8 percent in 2025 — far short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

Also, by looking at the geographic distribution of college graduates within the state (see chart on reverse), policymakers and other stakeholders can begin to work strategically and systematically to close achievement gaps. They can target counties and regions that show the greatest need and focus their efforts on those specific areas.

However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 2,104 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 4.5 percent — Utah will reach the Big Goal.

How do we know that Utah's economy will demand more college graduates? A recent analysis by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce provides the answer. According to the center's analysis of occupation data and workforce trends, 66 percent of Utah's jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Utah will need to fill about 477,000 vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies, 308,000 will require postsecondary credentials, while only 169,000 are expected to be filled by high school graduates or dropouts.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of Utah residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In 2008, nearly 370,000 Utah residents fit into this category



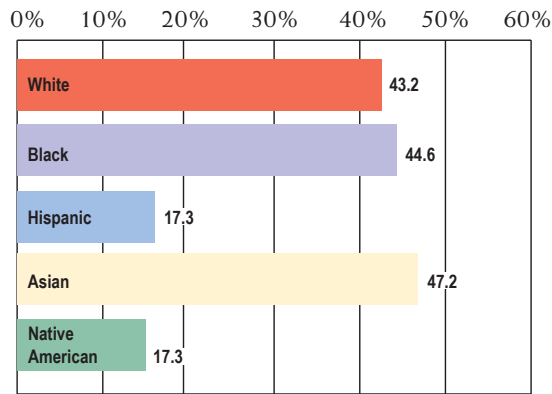
Levels of education for Utah residents, ages 25-64

Less than ninth grade	39,776	3.0%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	75,420	5.8%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	306,112	23.4%
Some college, no degree	361,277	27.6%
Associate degree	136,295	10.4%
Bachelor's degree	268,965	20.5%
Graduate or professional degree	121,873	9.3%
TOTAL	1,309,718	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

It will be impossible to reach the Big Goal without significantly increasing college success among the groups that can accurately be called 21st century students, including working adults, low-income and first-generation students and students of color. Closing attainment gaps among racial and ethnic groups is a particular challenge in Utah, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in Utah are displayed in the accompanying bar graph.

Degree-attainment rates among Utah adults (ages 25-64), by population group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

These gaps have persisted for decades, and closing them is obviously a big challenge. Still, it can and *must* be done. It will require concerted and strategic efforts over many years — efforts based on solid evidence about what works to increase attainment. Information about successful strategies to increase the number of students who complete higher

education is available on Lumina Foundation's Web site. The site also provides specific information about Utah's degree-attainment rates at www.luminafoundation.org/state_data/. From there, you can find links to data from all 50 states.

Still more information is available at a Web-based resource created by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). The NCHEMS Information Center provides detailed comparative data for all states and counties as well as other contextual information that can help higher education policymakers and analysts make sound policy decisions. We urge you to visit the site (www.higheredinfo.org).

Percentage of Utah adults (25-64) with a two- or four-year degree, by county:

Box Elder	31.2	Salt Lake	39.7	Tooele	30.3	Washington	31.4
Cache	44.2	Sanpete	33.2	Uintah	17.8	Weber	32.9
Davis	43.8	Sevier	28.4	Utah	47.8	Other counties	29.4*
Iron	38.0	Summit	61.3	Wasatch	45.7		

*This percentage is an average for the 15 Utah counties with fewer than 20,000 residents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

Lumina Foundation for Education is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college — especially low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Our goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025.

Lumina pursues this goal in three ways: by identifying and supporting effective practice, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change. For more details on the Foundation, visit our Web site at www.luminafoundation.org.

