



State of the Union: The Graduate, Online, and Adult Learner Markets



Today's Presenter



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Education's Trusted Partner to Help Schools and Students Thrive



Your Imperatives Determine Ours

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Prepare Your Institution for the Future

Executive guidance rooted in research to support your strategic priorities

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT

Achieve Your Enrollment and Growth Goals

Tailored partnerships powered by a recruitment ecosystem with unrivaled reach to enroll your future classes

STUDENT SUCCESS

Build a Student-Centric Campus

Technology trusted by 850 schools to retain, graduate, and empower more students

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Advance DEI on Campus and in Your Community

Technology, research, and bold initiatives to strengthen your DEI strategy and eliminate equity gaps

DATA AND ANALYTICS

Embrace Digital Transformation

Data and analytics solutions built for higher education to guide decisions and accelerate innovation

We partner with **2,500+** institutions to
accelerate progress and enable lasting change.

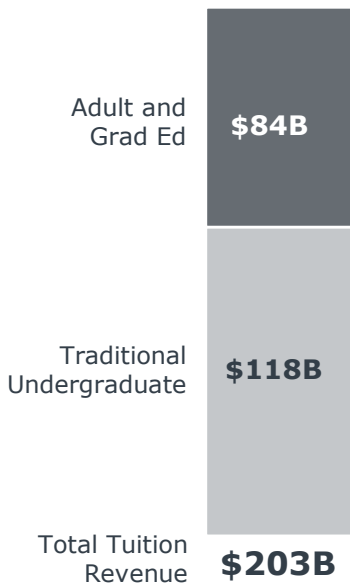
95%+ of our partners return to us year after year
because of results we achieve, together.

How Big is the Adult and Grad Ed Market?



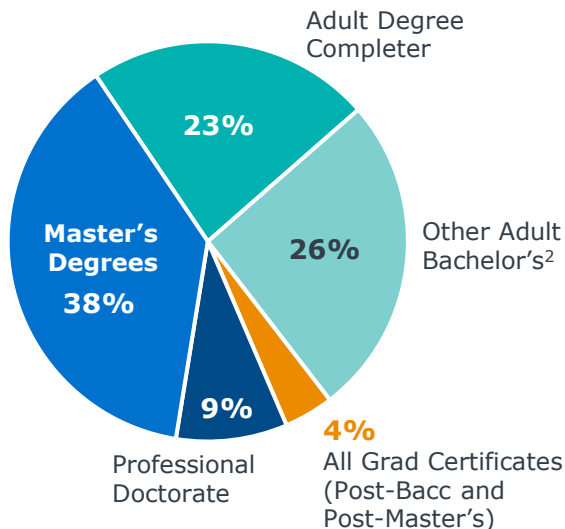
Adult Learners Make Up 42% of Total Higher Ed Tuition Revenue

Estimated Higher Ed Gross Annual Revenue¹, 2021



25+ Undergrad Students Account for Half of All Adult Ed Revenue

Estimated Total Gross Annual Revenue from Adult (25+) Bachelor's, Post-Bac Certificates, and Graduate Enrollment, 20-21



1) Tuition discounts not included in analysis

2) Includes first-time adult students, second bachelor's students, and non-degree seekers

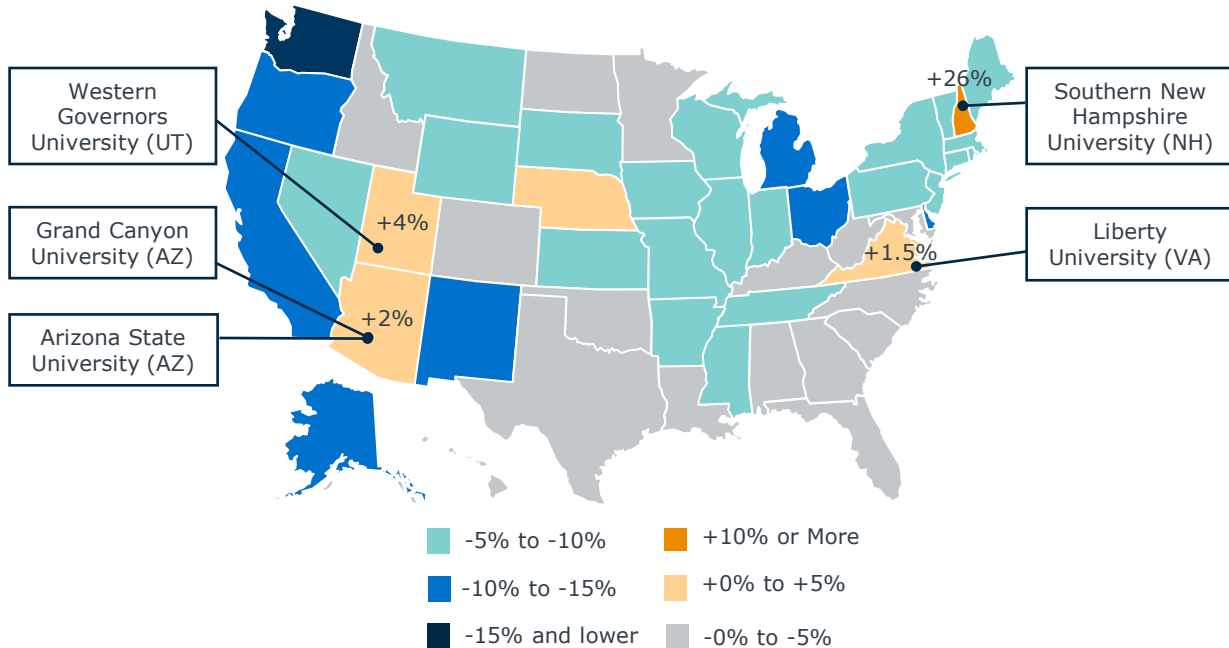
Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Postbaccalaureate Enrollment. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences ([link](#)); Weissman, S. *Lower completion rates among part-time students*. Inside Higher Ed ([link](#)); National Student Clearinghouse. (2023) *Some College, No Credential Report* ([link](#)); IPEDS Fall 2021 Enrollment Survey Data; IPEDS Spring 2021 Conferrals Survey Data; IPEDS 2021 Student Charges Survey Data; EAB interviews and analysis.



Total Enrollment Falls Across the United States

Falling Enrollment Across US, Institutions with Large Online Enrollment Driving Positive Percent Change in Handful of States

Percent Change in Estimated Enrollment by State of Institution, 2019-2021¹



1) MS, OH, WA: Large declines between 2019 and 2020 are due to a single institution with relatively large enrollments that has not submitted data as of 11/19/2020.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC), Current Term Enrollment Estimates: Fall 2021, [Table 9a, Estimated Enrollment by State of Institution: 2019 to 2021](#), accessed June 1, 2022. See folder: "Enrollment by State of Institution, NSC Data (Q1E)"

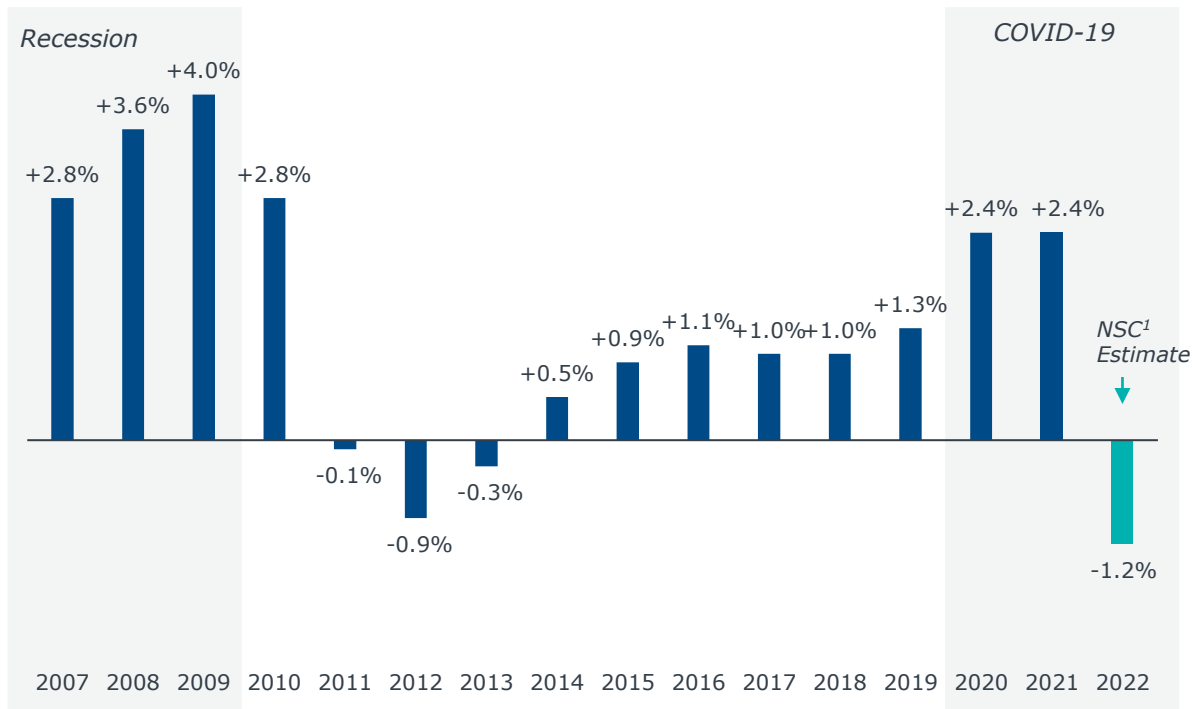
- 1 **The Master's Market**
- 2 Adult Degree Completer Market
- 3 Alternative Credentials Market

The Graduate Pandemic Boom Didn't Last Long



Pandemic-Fueled Growth Weak Compared Previous Recession Growth

Year on Year Growth of Total Graduate Enrollments – All 4-Year Institutions



1) National Student Clearinghouse..

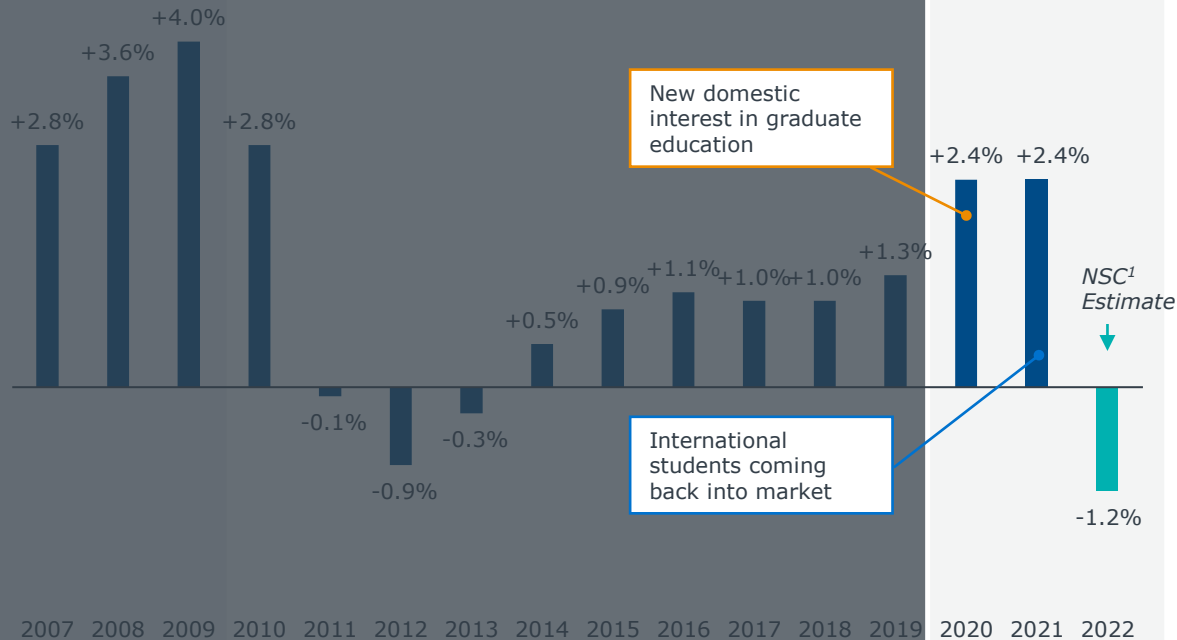
Pandemic Boom Really Didn't Last That Long



Pandemic-Fueled Growth Weak Compared Previous Recession Growth

Year on Year Growth of Total Graduate Enrollments – All 4-Year Institutions

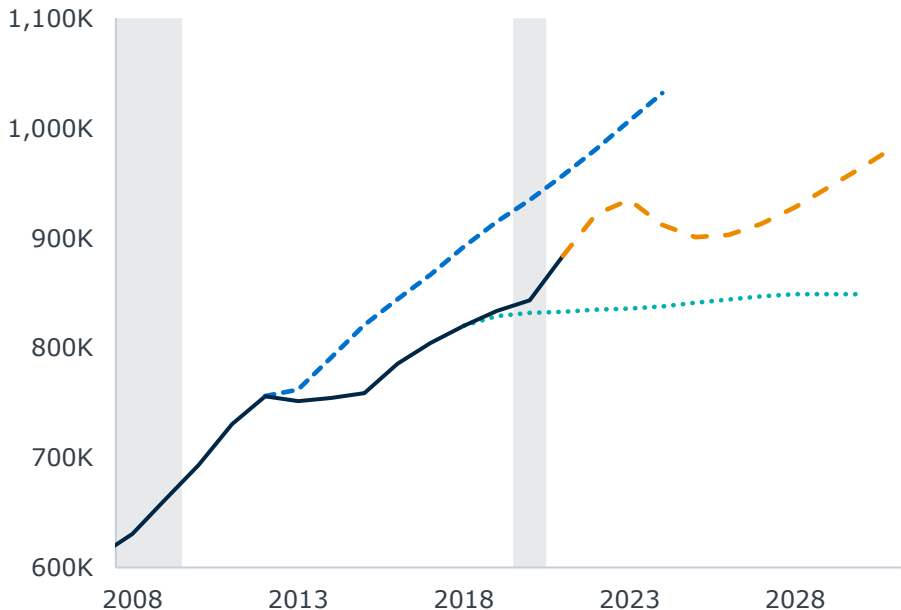
Recession



1) National Student Clearinghouse..

Short-Term Expectations Variable, But Evening Out

Master's Degree Conferrals and Projections, 2008-2031



Master's Degree Conferrals
 2014 Projection
 2021 Projection
 Recession
 2017 Projection

2.8%
Projected Annual Growth, 2014- 2024

0.2%
Projected Annual Growth, 2020 - 2030

1.1%
Projected Annual Growth, 2021 - 2031

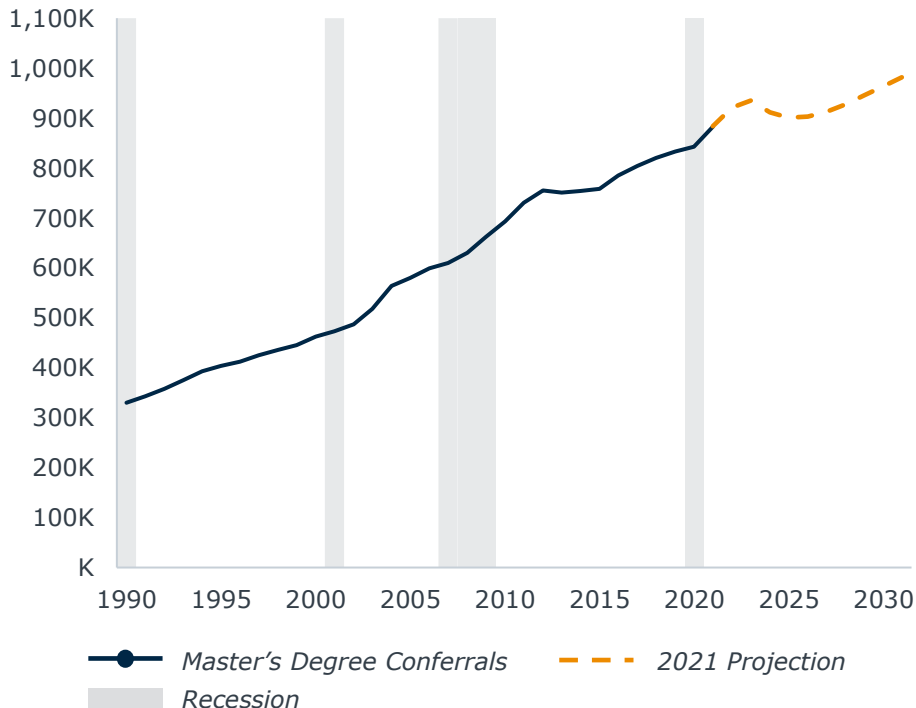
2.2%
Actual Avg. Annual Growth, 2008 - 2021

1) The graph includes a 'year 0' for each projection. These 'year 0s' (2013, 2019, and 2021) are actual figures, not projections.

Long-Term Picture Shows Durable, Slower Growth



Master's Degree Conferrals and Projections, 1990-2031



1.1%

Projected Annual Growth,
2021 - 2031

3.2%

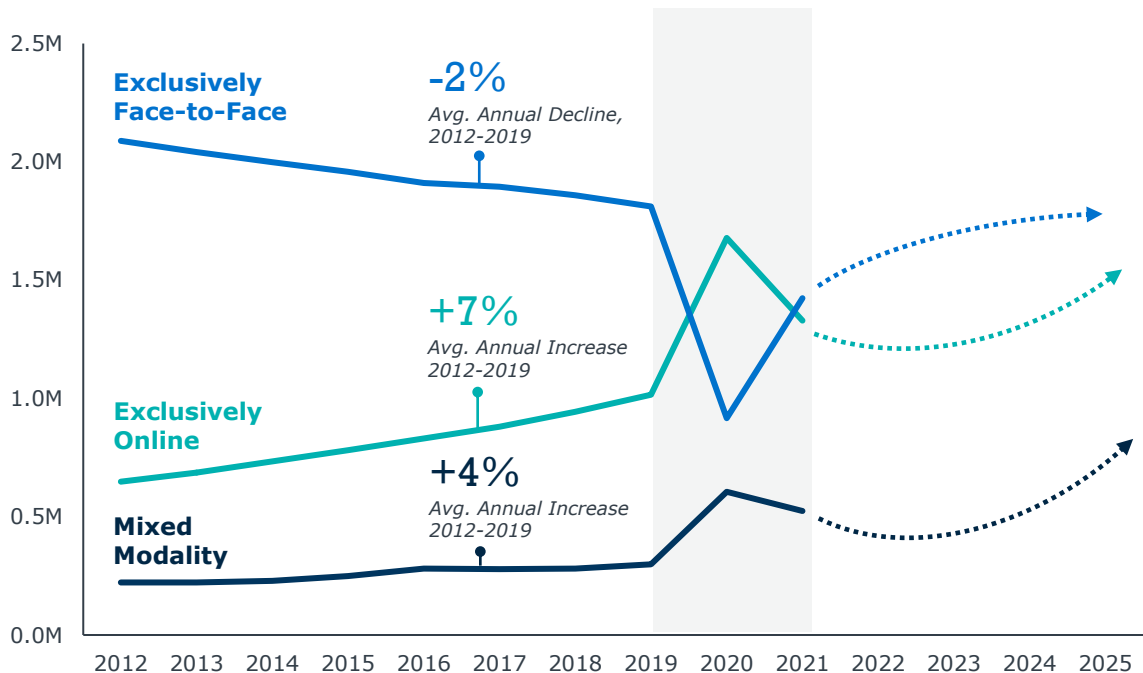
Actual Avg. Annual
Growth, 1990 - 2021

1) The graph includes a 'year 0' for each projection. These 'year 0s' (2013, 2019, and 2021) are actual figures, not projections.

The Slow Return to 'Normal'

Pandemic Accelerates Existing Trend Towards Virtual and Hybrid learning

Graduate¹ Enrollments and Projections 2012-2025: Exclusively, Some, and No Online² Courses

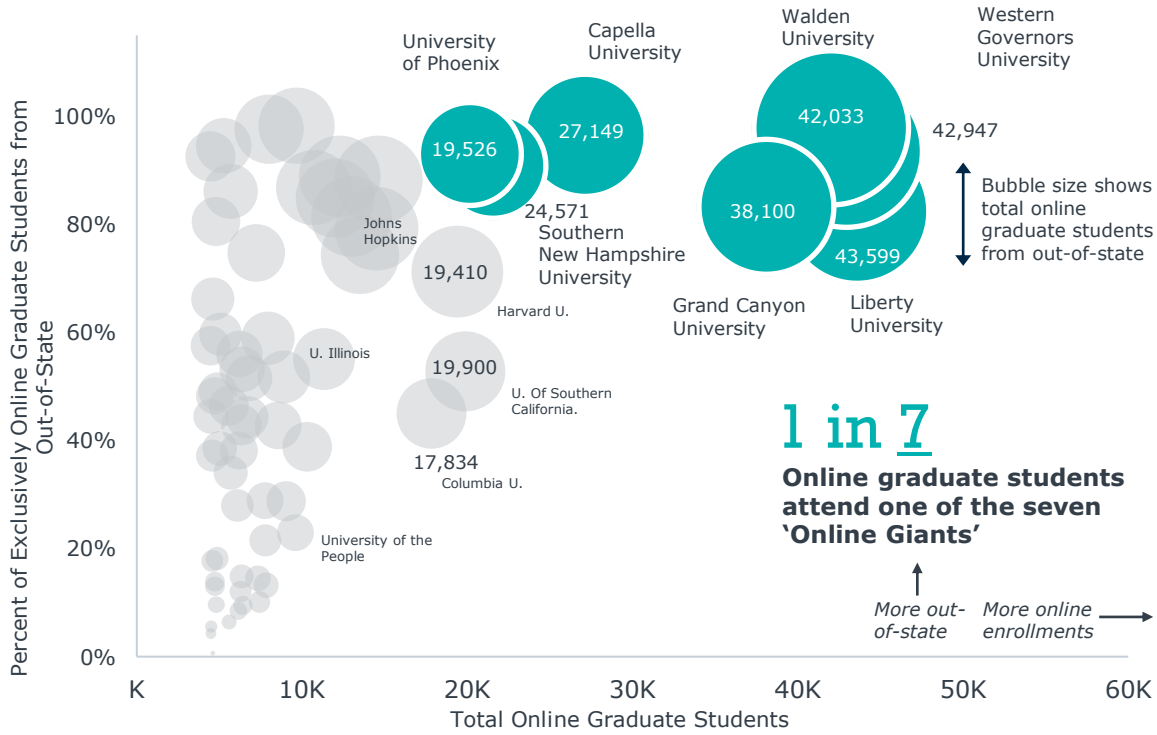


1) Graduate students include both master's and doctoral students.

2) Recorded as 'Distance Education' in IPEDS data

Giants Loom Over Online Grad Market

Institutions With More Than 2,500 Exclusively Online¹ Graduate Enrollments, Fall 2020
Total Exclusively Online Graduate Enrollments and Percent From Out-of-State

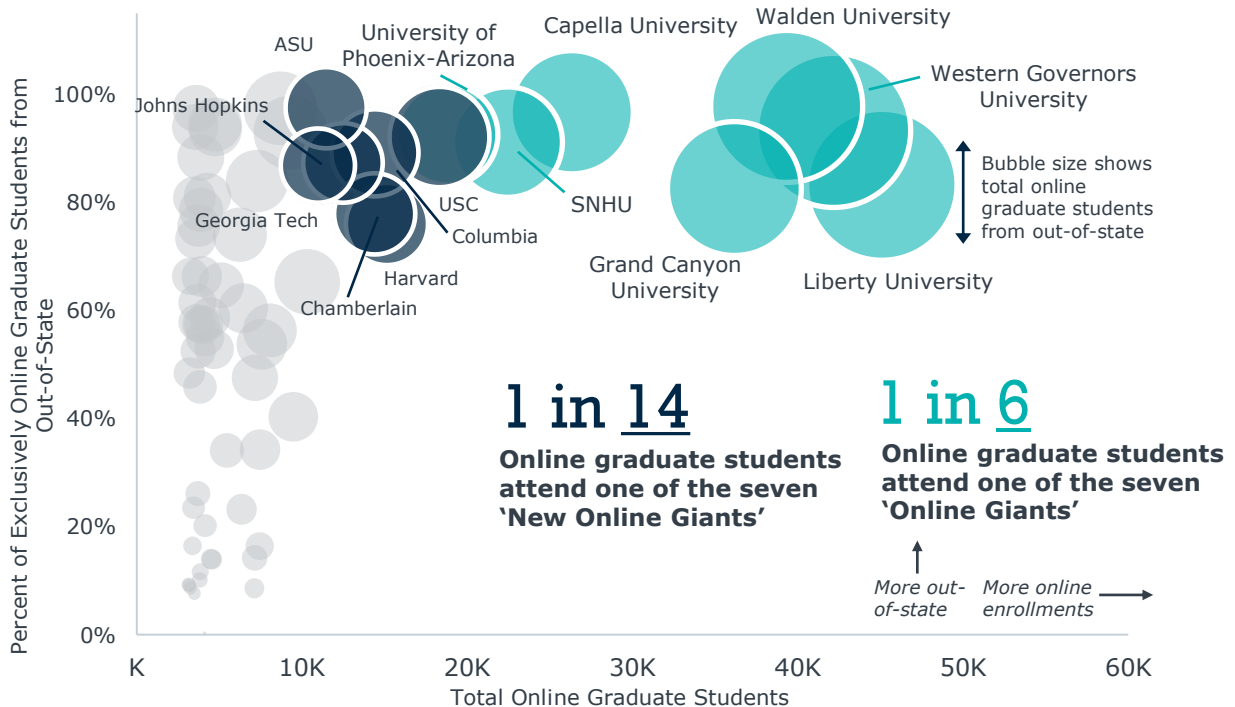


1) Recorded by IPEDS as exclusively distance enrollments.
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Source: EAB analysis of distance enrollment data from IPEDS Fall Enrollment Surveys 2012-20.

Online Giants Lost Dominance Over Pandemic

Institutions With More Than 2,500 Exclusively Online¹ Graduate Enrollments, Fall 2021
 Total Exclusively Online Graduate Enrollments and Percent From Out-of-State

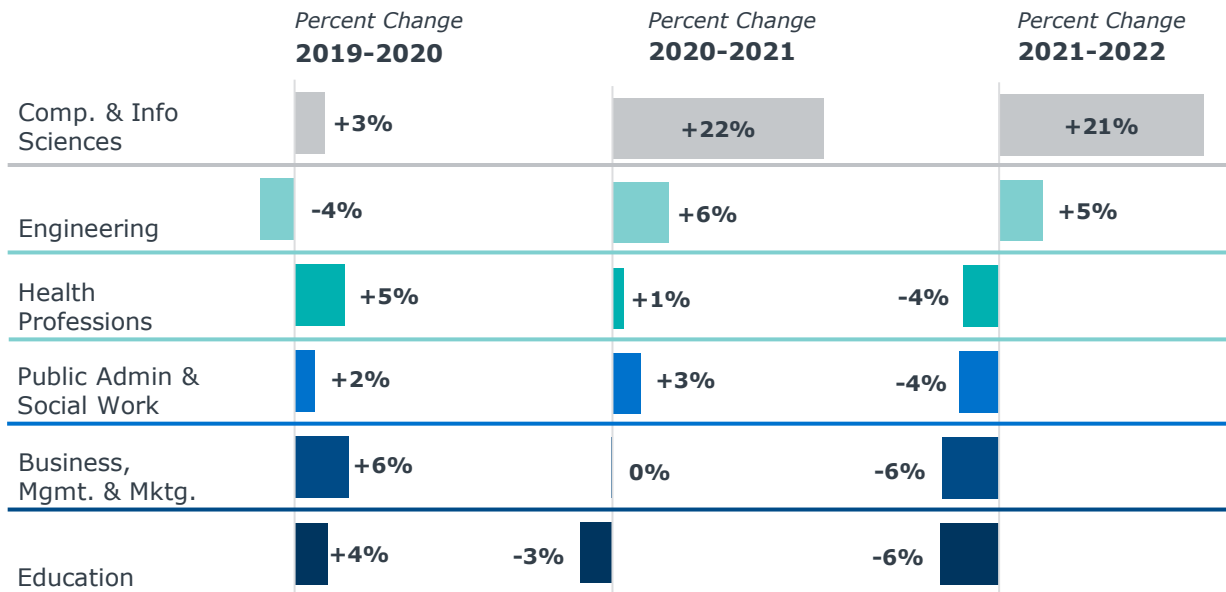


1) Recorded by IPEDS as exclusively distance enrollments.

Already in Demand, CS Degrees Take Off in 2020s

Grad enrollment surges in computer & information sciences, but for other core programs, pandemic enrollment growth is all but dissolved.

Change in Estimated Master's Degree Enrollments by Major From Fall 2019 to Fall 2022

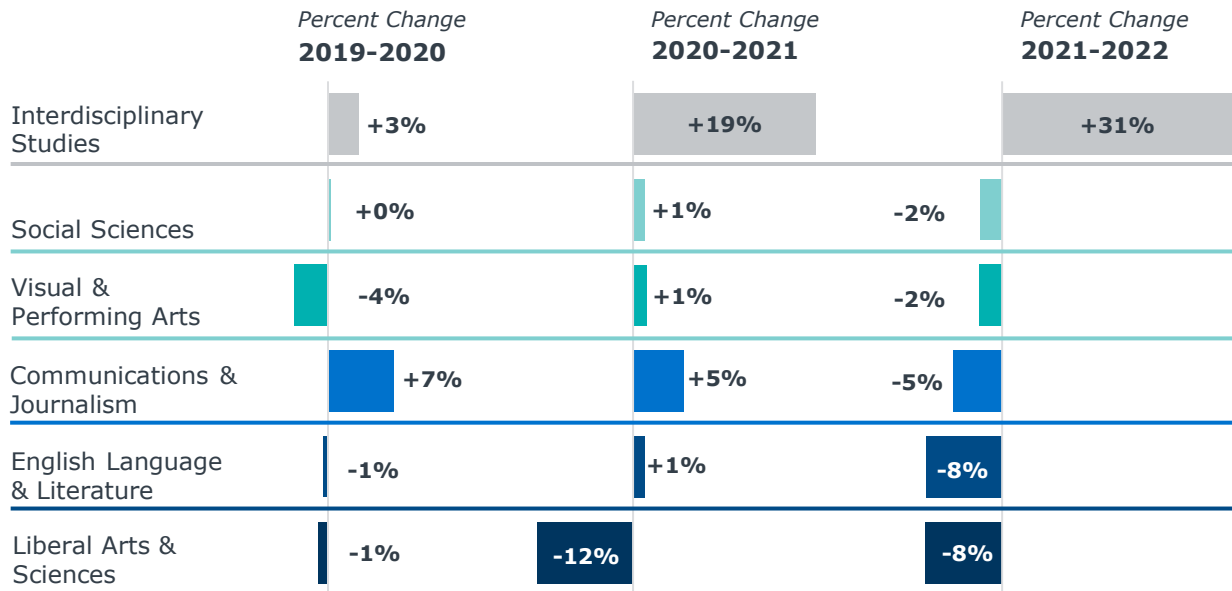


Declining Interest in More Traditional Programs



The Rise of Interdisciplinary Studies: Demand for Flexibility, A POI Marketing Push, or Something Else?

Change in Estimated Master's Degree Enrollments by Major From Fall 2019 to Fall 2022



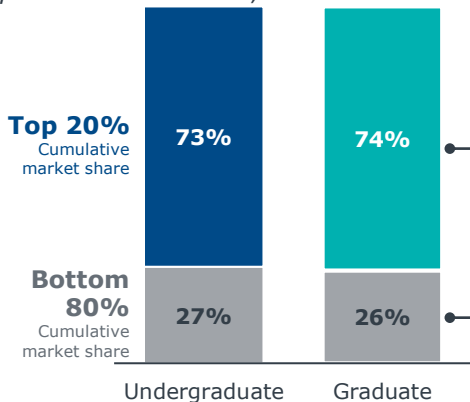
Source: 'COVID-19 Stay Informed Fall 2022', National Student Clearinghouse, Oct. 20, 2022; EAB interviews and analysis.

Capturing Share in Competitive Markets



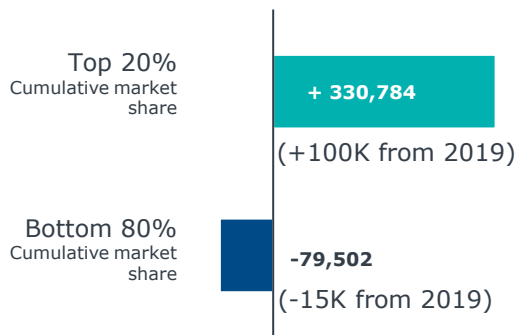
Institutions with Highest Conferrals Control Most of the Market

Percentage of total degrees¹ conferred by top 20% of institutions, 2021



And for Graduate Degrees, the Biggest Have Only Gotten Bigger

Net change in number of graduate degrees conferred, 2013-2021



What Does the Top 20% of the Graduate Market Look Like?



- 408 institutions
- 35% are R1 institutions
- 40% are in large cities



- 55% are public
- 41% are private, non-profit
- 4% are private, for-profit

1) Master's and professional doctorate.
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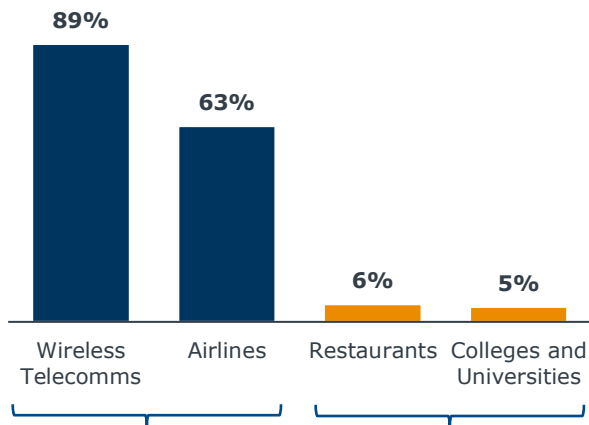
Source: EAB analysis of NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data.

Not a Simple Local vs. National Divide



Higher Ed is not an Oligopoly, but Still Faces Dominant Market Leaders

Market Share of Top 4 Competitors by Industry (Revenue)



Oligopolies

- National competition
- Large competitors dominate market
- Little room for new entrants

Competitive Markets

- Regional and national competition
- Room for new entrants
- Still competition from market leaders

Mass Market Leaders Limit Potential for National Growth

Regional Player

Market Leader



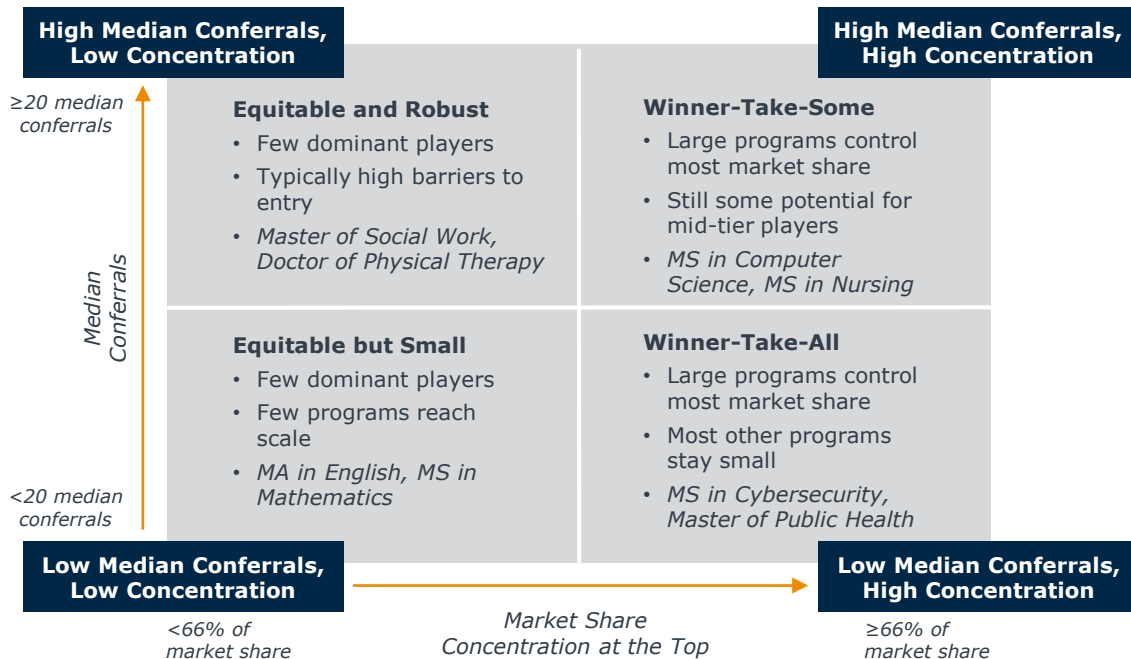
Regional Players

- Strong regional brand affinity
- Large online and on-ground presence
- Low cost or elite brand

Market Leaders

- National marketing reach
- Massive online scale
- Low cost

Assessing the Threat of Market Concentration



- 1 The Master's Market
- 2 **Adult Degree Completer Market**
- 3 Alternative Credentials Market

Where Mission Meets Margin



Opportunity to Serve At-Risk Population Can Also Augment Enrollment

Mission Motivations



Financial Motivations

- Increase local degree attainment
- Support workforce development initiatives
- Close racial and socioeconomic attainment gaps

- Capture additional enrollments and tuition revenue
- Diversify audiences, especially while high-school-aged college-going population shrinks



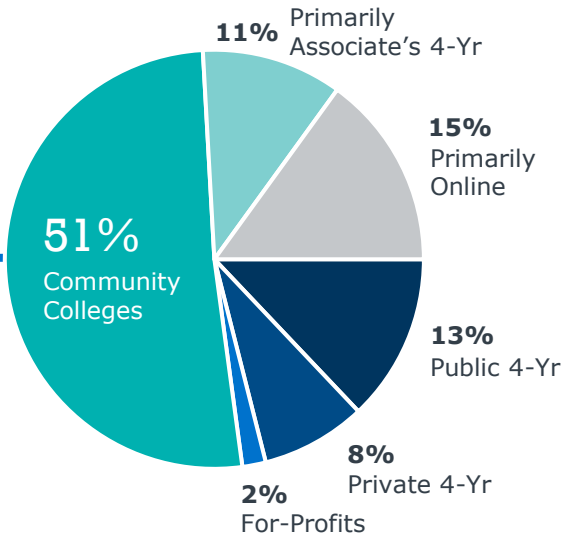
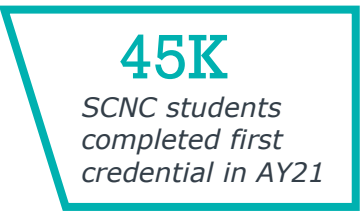
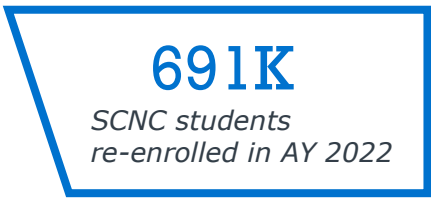
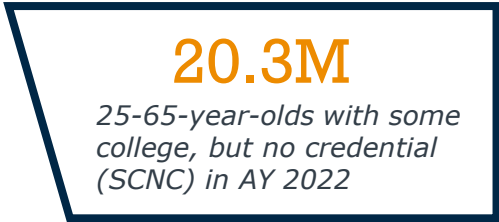
Completers Provide Enrollment Opportunity

Population Grows But Institutions Will Face Enrollment Challenges

Only 4% of Some-College, No Credential Students Enrolled in 2021

And of Those Re-Enrolling, Many Resume Their Journey at 2-Years

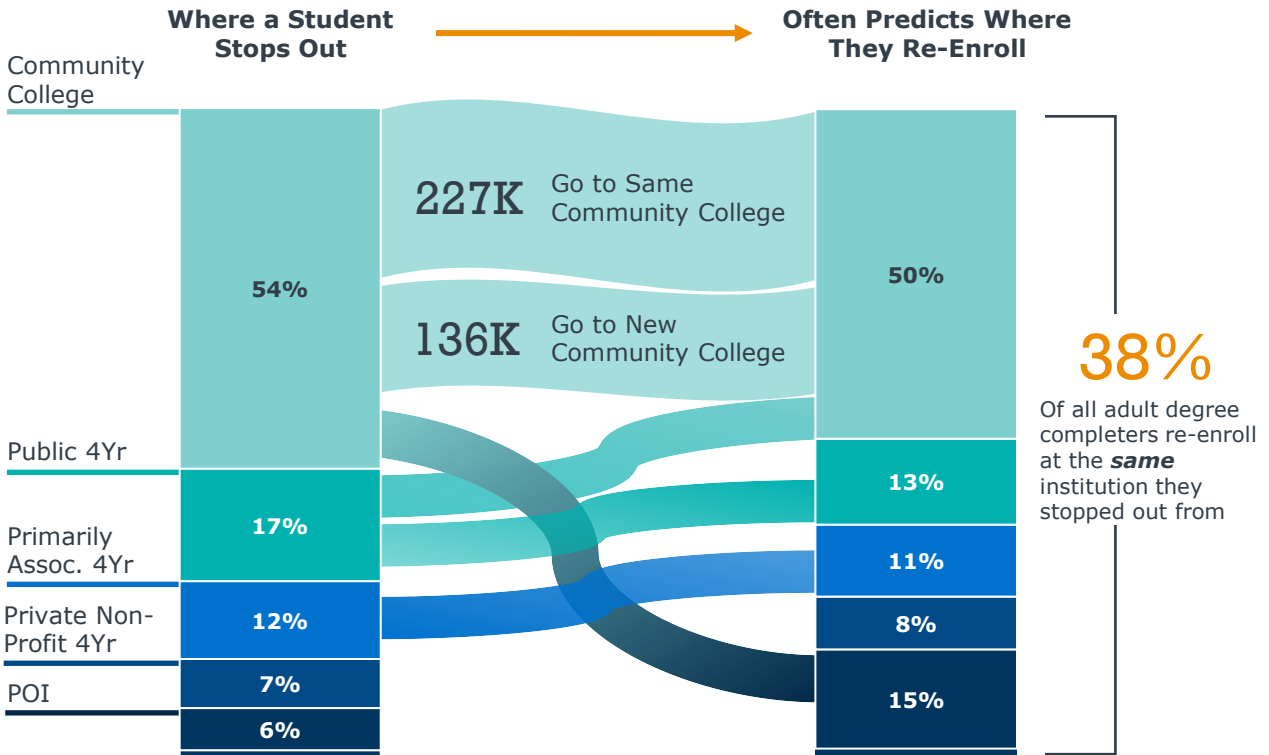
Institution choices of 691K degree completion students, 2021/2022



Your Own Stop-Outs Prove Easiest to Re-Recruit



Institutions attended by 744K degree completion students before and after re-enrollment in AY21



Design Program to Unique Audience Needs



Key Characteristics of Adult Degree Completers

Adult Experiences and Obligations

- Years of work and life experience
- Balancing school against family, work, etc.



1. Offer hybrid or online
2. Award credit for prior learning
3. Prioritize programs that
 - a. Award degree most quickly
 - b. Align best to career goal
4. Remove bureaucratic and policy impediments
5. Specialize services and communities for adult students

Past College Experience

- Earned previous academic credit
- Higher academic risk profile than general undergrad population



6. Prioritize generous credit transfer pathways and policies
7. Accommodate and serve high academic risk students
8. Build conditional admissions pathways

Financial Limitations

- Likely in debt from earlier enrollment
- Potential for past financial obstacles like bursar holds



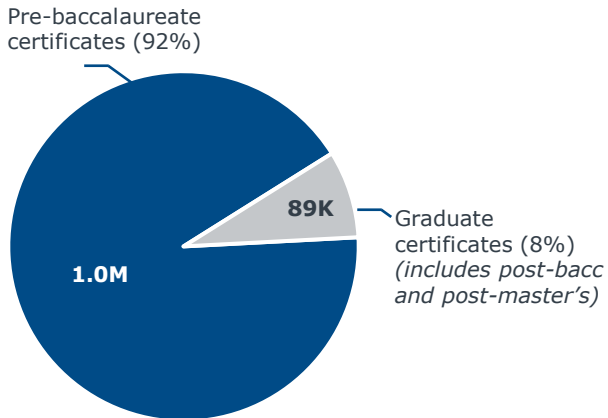
9. Address past financial impediments
10. Offer completer-specific scholarships

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- 3 **Alternative Credentials Market**

For-Credit Certificates a Community College Market

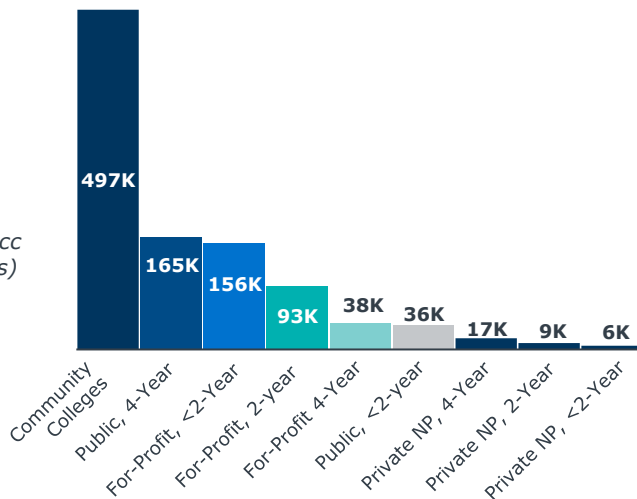
Pre-Baccalaureate Certificates Majority of For-Credit Conferals

n= 1,105,547 certificate conferrals, 2021



Public and Private 4-Years Confer a Small Share of Pre-Bacc Market

Pre-Baccalaureate Certificate Conferals by Segment, 2021

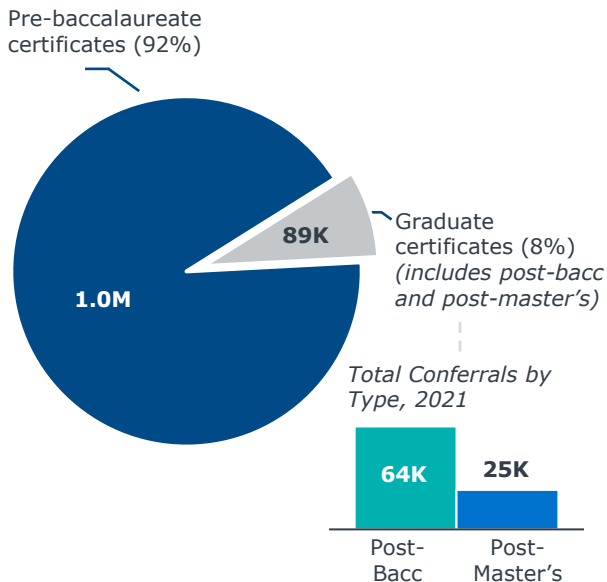


Fast Growth, But Small Market at Graduate Level



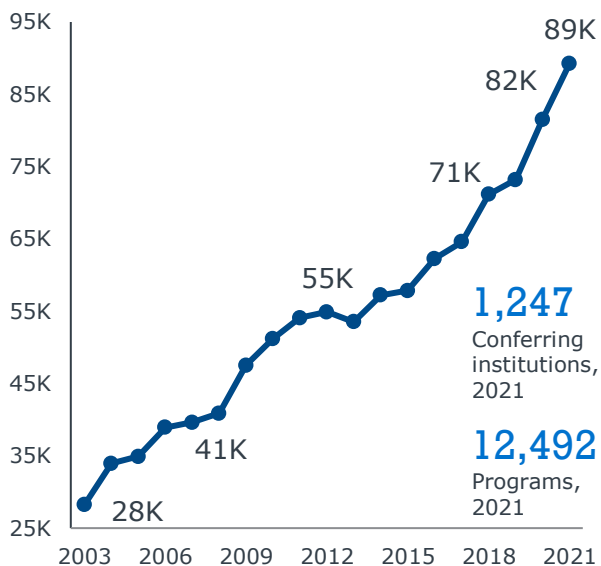
Graduate Certificates a Tiny Slice of Overall For-Credit Market

n= 1,105,547 certificate conferrals, 2021



Hype Over Fast, Sustained Growth Masks Small Market Size

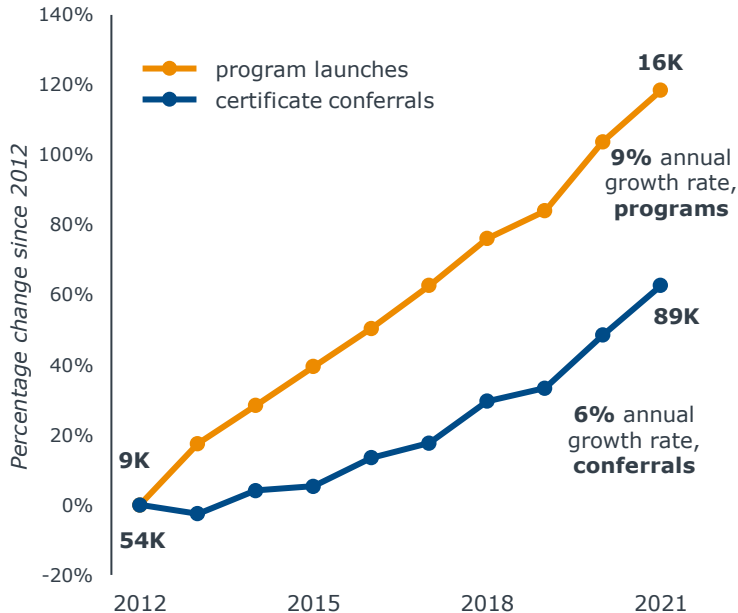
Annual Graduate Certificate Conferrals, 2003-2021





Unfettered Certificate Program Proliferation

Launches of New For-Credit Graduate Certificate Programs Far Outpace Conferrals



Many Programs Fail to Take Off (but Also Fail to Close)

44%

For-credit graduate certificate programs reporting zero completions in 2021

5

Median number of annual for-credit graduate certificate conferrals per program, excluding those with zero conferrals, in 2021

Beyond Revenue, Certificates Advance Mission

Aligning Certificate Strategies with Institutional Goals


Access Underserved Student Markets

Stackable Career-Oriented UG Pathways



MBA Readiness Certificate




Sustain Mission-Critical Partnerships and Programs

Funding Model for Mission-Critical Programs



Onsite Corporate Learner Support




Lower Barriers to Program Innovation

Fast-Cycle Market Viability Testing



Nimble and Stackable Grad Certificate Modules



EAB Adult Learner Recruitment

Secure Your Future in a Changing Graduate, Online, and Adult Learner Market

Outperform the Market at Every Stage of the Funnel



Strategize

Identify and build market-ready programs for competitive advantage



Curate

Expand and diversify your pool of right-fit students



Cultivate

Customized campaigns to drive students to application



Convert

Improve yield and retention to maximize enrollment potential

What Makes Us Different

40+ Years of
**Higher Ed
Expertise**

**Unrivaled
Access** to New
Audiences

Seamless
**Marketing
Orchestration**

Visibility into
Full-Funnel
Performance

Proven Results in a Dynamic Landscape

200+

Partner institutions

6:1

Average ROI across
multiyear partnership

18%

Average graduate
enrollment growth

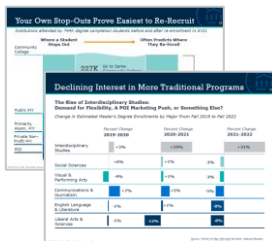
\$2M

Average NTR influenced
per partner

Today's Slides

1

Receive a copy of today's **presentation slides**



2

Register for our webinar on April 22 to hear more tactics to **design programs for adult degree completers**



3

Explore findings from our survey of 3,800+ graduate, online, and adult degree completion students



4

Get the latest insights from EAB

Subscribe to the EAB Briefing to receive EAB's latest and most relevant content each morning

Thank You!



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Consider Our Team a Resource

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.



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