COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

You'll Like Tacoma

Tacoma has again made the list of the 50 Best College Towns in America by independent college review journal Best College Reviews (BCR). Even without what BCR calls a "flagship institution," Tacoma is a community that contributes to a high-quality college experience and is a great place to stay after graduation. Criteria included livability, cultural offerings, school presence, large employers, and student-to-resident ratio.

What sets Tacoma apart? For starters, our eight institutions of higher learning: four 4-year institutions (University of Puget Sound, University of Washington Tacoma, The Evergreen State College Tacoma, and nearby Pacific Lutheran University,) and four 2-year colleges (Tacoma Community College, Pierce College, Clover Park Technical College, and Bates Technical College). Those institutions, spread throughout the city and into the suburbs, contribute to a culture that draws students to Tacoma. More significantly for the work of our Graduate Tacoma partners: The proximity of these institutions and the culture they are creating are turning many Tacoma students' dreams of attending college into a reality.

Add our overall livability, diversity, natural beauty, and proximity to urban areas, mountains, and Sound, and Tacoma stands out for students.

KEY FINDINGS

2-Year Declines; 4-Year Increases

College enrollment overall has declined slightly from our baseline in 2010, though there are some data points that bear more attention *(see below)*. Our baseline has changed this year because, for the first time, National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data allows us to more accurately track the students who graduated TPS, enrolled in college within one year, and persisted to completion. This is another example of how our increasing data capacity is helping us get to better numbers that are more reliable and sustainable over time. Sometimes we must shift baselines to incorporate the new data. NSC gives us student-level insights to drive programmatic change; however, we can still explore Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) reporting for a more comprehensive assessment. As we gain data capacity, more robust student-level analysis will be possible.
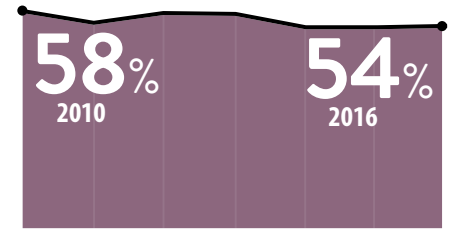
Data-Driven Takeaways

- When we look at all high school graduates (not just the cohort that began in 9th grade), enrollment in two-year institutions is down regardless of socioeconomic status, exhibiting a drop of 12 points from 34% to 22% (NSC).
- Though there has been some volatility year to year in the enrollment numbers for Black students, the percentage enrolled has declined seven points overall since baseline (NSC).
- Looking at ERDC data, trends emerge for all graduates:
  - Among all students enrolling in Washington schools, public 4-year enrollment is up 16% over baseline (now 39%) while public 2-year enrollment is down 12% over the same period.
  - Young men are making bigger gains (24% to 31%) in 4-year enrollment than young women (31% to 35%).
  - Enrollment in 4-year institutions has increased for both students in poverty (+8%) and those not in poverty (+6%).
  - Tacoma has the same proportion of students enrolling in college as Spokane and is just three points below the state average (59%). However, we are well behind Seattle (75%).
  - Enrollment in private and out-of-state institutions has remained relatively flat.
  - By high school we see a wide spread in enrollment rates, ranging from ~15% (Oakland) and 51% (Mount Tahoma) to ~67% (SAMI and Stadium).

Additional longitudinal data regarding college enrollment, persistence, and completion is available on page 15.
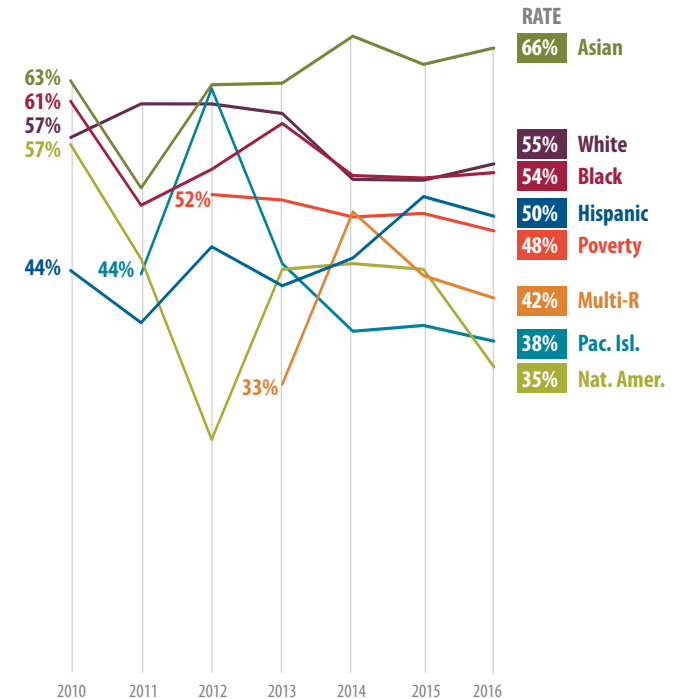
DATA TRENDS

BASELINE TO CURRENT

2- or 4-Year Enrollment within One Year of H.S. Graduation

58% 2010

54% 2016

AIMING HIGHER GOAL: Increase the percentage of TPS graduates who enroll in two- or four-year colleges, apprenticeships, or technical certification courses within one year of graduation.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKOUT

RATE

66%	Asian
55%	White
54%	Black
50%	Hispanic
48%	Poverty
42%	Multi-R
38%	Pac. Isl.
35%	Nat. Amer.

63%
61%
57%
57%

52%

44% 44%

33%

2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016

Data Source: ERDC - High School Feedback Reports; National Student Clearinghouse via TPS with support from Degrees of Change