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**DATE:** Friday, January 22, 2021  
**TO** Western Governors University Texas  
**FROM:** James Henson, PhD and Joshua Blank, PhD  
**SUBJECT:** Key findings from The 101: The Texas Higher Education Poll, 2021

**Overview**

Results from the 2021 edition of the 101 Texas Higher Education Poll provide several sets of findings relevant to matters of interest to the partners in the polls as suggested by discussions with principals to date. We offer the highlights below with the assumption that the relative prominence given each set of results will be dependent on the different contexts in which the data will be deployed, i.e. promotion in media, use in legislative advocacy, and/or internal discussions within or among individual sponsoring organizations.

**Worries about the cost of obtaining a higher education degree or certification remain prominent in Texans' views of education in both personal and general terms, even though a large majority of Texans who have obtained post-secondary degrees think the cost was worth it to them.** Judgments about cost are likely reflected in the continuing high level of concern about student loan debt among both borrowers and non-borrowers. Large majorities of Texans, both with and without post-secondary degrees or certificates, continue to attribute economic, social, and personal benefits to obtaining post-secondary degrees.

**As they have over the previous four editions of the poll, about half of Texans continue to say that Texas' state government spends "too little" on higher education, and a majority continue to say the state doesn't provide enough financial aid for higher ed students.** While the variance in the result is limited, it appears that the share who think the state doesn't spend enough on higher ed has plateaued somewhat after increasing in the early years of the poll: the share increased from 45% in 2015 to 49% in 2016, then to a high of 52% in 2017, before decreasing within the margin of error to 51% in 2019 and 49% in 2021.

**Large shares of Texans appear to have embraced the pursuit of lifelong learning opportunities within the higher education system in Texas.** Nearly a third (32%) of Texans say that they have explored enrolling in an educational program in the last five years, including 60% of those over the age of 30 and more than 40% of those who report incomes of less than \$40,000 per year. Among Texans who don't view their job as a career, 56% say that they need more education and training, and even among those who do see their job as a career, 24% still say that they need more education or training. Twenty-five percent say that they plan to enroll in an educational or training program in the next five years, with more than half of that group being over the age of 30 (56%).

**An identifiable share of Texans report encountering some kind of technology-related obstacle to participation in online education.** About 15% of Texans report lacking the necessary equipment; 15% lack a reliable internet connection, and 18% say they are not

comfortable enough with technology to take a college level course entirely online. Lack of reliable internet service is cited by 23% of Texans as an obstacle to completing a college degree. This was the least frequently cited obstacle in the broad battery of obstacles presented to respondents, but, crucially, the experience of this obstacle is unevenly distributed by geography: 11% of suburban, but 28% of urban and 30% of rural Texans cited internet reliability as an obstacle to degree completion. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have spurred some action on remedying obstacles related to equipment, per the point following.

**While Texans are experiencing interruptions to their post-secondary education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, these interruptions, not surprisingly, are less commonly experienced impacts of the pandemic than are more immediate economic hardships such as job loss and/or reductions in retirement or other savings.** Asked about the impact of the pandemic, 11% reported an interruption to their higher education or certificate training, with another 15% reporting an interruption in the higher education or certificate training of a family member. But it is notable that nearly a quarter of Texans (24%) reported needing to upgrade their internet service in order to continue working from home or attending school remotely, with rural residents (27%) more likely than urban (24%) or suburban (21%) Texans to need to make this upgrade – likely reflective of initial inequities in internet access, as indicated above.

## **Key Findings**

***Most Texans don't think the state spends enough on higher education, and a large majority think it's important for the state to continue providing aid to students with financial need.***

- A majority (51%) say the state doesn't provide enough financial aid for college students, a three percentage point increase since 2019.
- A plurality (49%) of Texas adults say that Texas' state government spends 'too little' on higher education, while only 9% say that they spend too much — statistically unchanged from our 2019 poll.
- Eighty percent say it is 'very important' for the State of Texas to continue providing state-funded financial aid for college students who demonstrate financial need.
- Nearly as many Texans, 75 percent, say it's 'very important' for the state to provide financial aid for adult learners who demonstrate financial need.
- As in previous surveys, more than 90% of Texans agree that it is essential to have an educated workforce if Texas' economy is going to compete with other states.

***Texans continue to consider the cost of higher education an obstacle to obtaining a degree, and worry about student loan debt as both a personal and a policy problem.***

- Among those without a college degree, financial concerns top obstacles for not completing a college degree. The number one obstacle cited was "the cost of a degree" (68%), though followed closely by job or work responsibilities (67%) and taking on student loan debt (62%).
- Among those considering enrolling in a higher education program, 60% said the cost of tuition was extremely important to their decision.

- Both Texans with and without student loan debt see student debt as a major problem. Overall, 76% of Texans view the problem of student loan debt for people in the United States as a “major problem,” including 74% of those who currently hold no student loan debt themselves.

***Despite concerns about cost, Texans with degrees say that the cost was worth it in both economic and personal terms.***

- Seventy percent of those with associate’s degrees, 74% of those with college degrees, and 84% of those with graduate degrees say that the money they or their family has paid for their education has paid off or will pay off.
- A majority of Texans with college or graduate degrees (71%) say that the value most college graduates get back over their lifetime is equal in value or worth more than what they paid for attending college. However, there are signs of decay in the extent of this judgment over the life of the poll: The share of these responses has declined from a high point of 86% in 2015.
- Large majorities of Texans also continue to agree that having a degree or certificate beyond high school is somewhat or very important (92%), and that those degrees are a source of pride for most people (93%); lead to a higher income (84%) and a better quality of life (79%); increases the respect one receives from others (75%); and are essential for getting a good job (69%).

***Texans continue to seek out more post-secondary education in various parts of the state’s higher education system.***

- Nearly a third of Texas adults (32%) say that they’ve explored enrolling in an educational program in the last five years, with 60% of those being over the age of 30, and more than 40% of those who report incomes of less than \$40,000 per year.
- Among Texans who don’t view their job as a career, 56% say that they need more education and training; but even among those who do see their job as a career, 24% still say that they need more education or training.
- Twenty-five percent of Texans say that they will enroll in an educational or training program in the next five years, with more than half of those being over the age of 30 (56%).
- Among those who say that they will seek out more education in the next five years, 37% say that they would do so at a 4-year public college or university, while 32% say that they would do so at a community college.
- Among those who say that they need more education and training to get the job or career that they want, 37% say they would do so at a community college, 32% say they would enroll at a 4-year public college or university, and 28% say they would get more education at another type of institution.

***Texans are experiencing disruptions in post-secondary education along with the more widely recognized economic impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.***

- Asked about their experiences since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, 11% reported an interruption to their higher education or certificate training, with another 15%

reporting an interruption in the higher education or certificate training of a family member.

- An interruption in the K-12 education of a child under 18 living in the household was experienced by nearly 1 in 5 Texans overall (18%), including 38% of those Texans with a child under 18 currently living in the household.
- The most commonly cited impacts of the pandemic among a list of nine possible choices were “lost savings or retirement funds” (24%), a lost job (23%), and someone in the household contracting COVID (19%).

***During a time in which education has moved primarily online, a significant minority of Texans face unrecovered costs and technological burdens, including a lack of reliable internet access and/or limited technological fluency to continue their education.***

- More than 1 in 3 Texans (36%) report purchasing new equipment in order to continue to work or go to school online during the pandemic. Of those who need to purchase equipment, 32% purchased for work, 28% for school, and 40% for both work and school.
- A large majority of those who had to purchase technology for work or school – 87% – were not reimbursed for those purchases.
- Among those who purchased technology, 43% said the purchases were a financial hardship.
- Lack of reliable internet service to access online courses or education is cited by 23% of Texans as an obstacle to completing a college degree. This was the least frequently cited obstacle in the battery presented to respondents; however, its distribution was uneven, with only 11% of suburban, but 28% of urban, and 30% of rural Texans, citing internet reliability as an obstacle to degree completion.
- However, 24% reported needing to upgrade their internet service in order to continue working from home or attending school remotely, with rural residents (27%) more likely than urban (24%) or suburban (21%) Texans reporting needing to make this upgrade.
- About 15% of Texans report some type of technology related obstacle to taking a college level course entirely online: 15% lack the necessary equipment, 15% lack a reliable internet connection, and 18% are not comfortable enough with technology to take a college level course entirely online.

## **Methodology**

The survey utilized a stratified probability sample design, with respondents being randomly selected at the level of the household. The survey also employed a randomized cellphone supplement, with 61 percent of completed interviews being conducted among cell phone only or cell phone dominant households. A Spanish-language instrument was developed and bilingual interviewers offered respondents a chance to participate in English or Spanish. On average, respondents completed the interview in 17 minutes. 800 interviews were conducted between January 4-11, 2021. The final data set is weighted by race/ethnicity, age, and gender to achieve representativeness as defined by the Texas State Health Department’s population projections for the 2018 Texas Adult Population. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 3.46 percentage points.

## **About Strategic Research Associates**

*The principals at Strategic Research Associates are James Henson, PhD and Joshua Blank, PhD. One or the other has played a primary role in most of the major public statewide polls*

conducted in Texas since 2007. They are based in Austin, Texas, and can be contacted at SRATEXLLC@gmail.com.

### Poll Summary

Q1. In general, when thinking about the value of a college education today, would you say that the overall value most college graduates get back over their lifetime...

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. is worth more than what they pay for attending college	31%	32%	40%	38%	42%
2. is worth less than what they pay for attending college	38	31	25	31	22
3. is about equal to what they pay for attending college	26	28	25	24	27
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	5	9	9	7	9

Q2. In general, how important is having a degree or certificate beyond high school? Very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Very important	59%	67%	70%	71%	74%
2. Somewhat important	33	26	25	24	20
3. Not very important	5	3	3	3	4
4. Not at all important	3	2	1	0	2
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	0	0	1	2	1

*Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (would that be somewhat agree/disagree or strongly agree/disagree)*

**[RANDOMIZE Q3A-Q3E]**

Q3A. A certificate, certification, or degree beyond high school is essential for getting a good job.

1. Strongly agree	44%
2. Somewhat agree	25
3. Somewhat disagree	11
4. Strongly disagree	20
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1

Q3B. A certificate, certification, or degree beyond high school leads to a higher income.

1. Strongly agree	57%
2. Somewhat agree	27
3. Somewhat disagree	5
4. Strongly disagree	11
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1

Q3C. A certificate, certification, or degree beyond high school leads to a better quality of life.

1. Strongly agree	49%
2. Somewhat agree	30
3. Somewhat disagree	8
4. Strongly disagree	11
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2

Q3D. A certificate, certification, or degree beyond high school increases the respect one receives from others.

1. Strongly agree	41%
2. Somewhat agree	34
3. Somewhat disagree	10
4. Strongly disagree	13
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2

Q3E. A certificate, certification, or degree beyond high school is a source of pride for most people.

1. Strongly agree	67%
2. Somewhat agree	26
3. Somewhat disagree	2
4. Strongly disagree	5
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1

Q4. How about you? What is the highest level of education that you have completed? **[READ CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]**

1. Less than high school	4%
2. High school	14
3. Some college	20
4. Associate's degree or certificate	14
5. College degree	29
6. Post-graduate degree (MA, LLD, PhD)	18
7. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA <b>[DON'T READ]</b>	1

Q4A. **[ASK if Q4==3]** How many semesters did you complete? **[READ CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]** (N=165, Margin of Error is +/- 7.6%)

1. 2 Semesters or less	34%
2. 3 to 4 Semesters	32
3. 5 or more semesters	31
4. Don't know/Can't remember <b>[DON'T READ]</b>	3

Q4B. **[ASK if Q4==3|4|5|6]** Did you enroll in college or another post-secondary education program in the Fall semester following your graduation from high school? (N=66, Margin of Error is +/- 3.8%)

1. Yes	74%
2. No	26
3. Don't know/Can't remember <b>[DON'T READ]</b>	0

Q4C. **[ASK IF Q4==4|5|6]** What type of institution awarded your highest credential? **[Read 1-5]**  
*(N=501, Margin of Error is +/- 4.4%)*

1. A Community College	15%
2. A 4-year Public University	56
3. A 4-year Private University	15
4. A For-Profit University	3
5. Another type of institution	9
6. Don't know/Can't remember <b>[DON'T READ]</b>	0

Q5. **[ASK IF Q4==4|5|6]** And in what year did you earn your highest degree? **[OPEN-ENDED]**  
*(N=501, Margin of Error is +/- 4.4%)*

1. 1950-1959	1%
2. 1960-1969	3
3. 1970-1979	6
4. 1980-1989	13
5. 1990-1999	16
6. 2000-2009	23
7. 2010-2019	29
8. 2020	7
9. REFUSED	2

Q6. **[ASK IF Q4==3|4|5|6]** Thinking about what you and your family have paid for your education, would you say that your education has paid off for you, or not? *(N=666, Margin of Error is +/- 3.8%)*

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Has paid off/will pay off	71%	75%	82%	79%	86%
2. Has not paid off/will not pay off	28	24	17	18	13
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1	2	1	3	1

Q6A. **[ASK IF Q4==3|4|5|6]** Do you currently have student loan debt? *(N=666, Margin of Error is +/- 3.8%)*

1. Yes	27%
2. No	73
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	0



Q7. **[ASK IF Q4==3|4|5|6]** How useful was your college education in preparing you for a job or career? Would you say very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful, or not at all useful?  
(N=666, Margin of Error is +/- 3.8%)

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Very useful	47%	54%	67%	60%	67%
2. Somewhat useful	34	32	21	29	24
3. Not too useful	11	6	6	6	3
4. Not at all useful	7	5	5	4	6
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	0	2	1	1	0

Q8. **[ASK IF Q4<=3]** For each of the following, please tell me whether or not it has been an obstacle to completing a college degree? **[RANDOMIZE Q8A-Q8J]** (N=294, Margin of Error is +/- 3.7%)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Q8A. Family responsibilities	67%	33%
Q8B. Job or work responsibilities	56	44
Q8C. The cost of a degree	68	32
Q8D. The difficulty of finding classes that fit your schedule	48	52
Q8E. The time it would take to complete a degree	60	40
Q8F. The student loan debt you would have to take on	62	38
Q8G. Transferring hours or credits from one educational institution to another	44	56
Q8H. Lack of reliable internet service to access online courses or education	23	77
Q8I. Finding information about the best higher education institution to fit your situation	35	65
Q8J. Lack of academic preparation	46	54

Q9. Have you explored enrolling in an educational program in the last five years?

1. Yes	32%
2. No	68
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	0

Q10. Do you think of your current job as a career, a stepping-stone to a career, or do you think of it as just a job to get you by?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. A career	47%	44%	49%	42%	44%
2. A stepping stone to a career	16	12	14	15	11
3. Just a job to get you by	23	25	20	24	23
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	13	19	18	19	18

Q11. **[ASK IF Q10==2|3]** In general, do you feel you have the education and training necessary to get the kind of job or career you want, or do you need more education and training? (N=259, Margin of Error is +/- 6.1%)

	'21	'19	'17	'16	'15
1. Have necessary education and training	40%	36%	32%	31%	31%
2. Need more	56	60	62	67	67
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	4	4	6	2	3

Q12. **[ASK IF Q10==1]** In general, do you feel you have the education and training necessary to get ahead in your career, OR do you need more education and training? (N=393, Margin of Error is +/- 4.9%)

	'21	'19	'17	'16	'15
1. Have necessary education and training	72%	69%	71%	70%	58%
2. Need more	24	26	28	27	39
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	3	6	1	3	3

Q13. Do you think you will enroll in an educational or training program in the next five years?

1. Yes	25%
2. No	59
3. Maybe	16
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1

Q14. **[ASK IF Q11==2 OR Q12==2]** If you decided to get more education and training, what source would you be most likely to use? **[READ 1-5]** (N=233, Margin of Error is +/- 6.4%)

1. A community college	37%
2. A 4-year public college or university	32
3. A 4-year private college or university	2
4. A for-profit college or university	1
5. Another type of institution	23
6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	4

Q15. If you were considering enrolling in an educational program, would each of the following factors be extremely important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to your decision? **[RANDOMIZE A-I]**

	<i>Extremely important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Not very important</i>	<i>Not at all important</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Q15A. Cost of tuition	60	27	3	8	1
Q15B. Availability of financial aid	46	27	11	15	1
Q15C1. Programs that are taught entirely online	21	39	19	20	1
Q15C2. Programs that are taught both online and in-person	33	44	10	12	1
Q15D. Proximity to your home or work	42	37	8	12	1
Q15E. Finding time in your current schedule	59	24	5	11	1
Q15F. Potential to improve your value to employers	49	33	6	11	1
Q15G. Your interest in the subject of the program	73	17	3	6	1
Q15H. Whether you fit in with other students	11	22	26	40	2
Q15I. Potential to advance your career	56	25	6	11	1
Q15J. The length of the program	37	45	6	12	1

Thanks for sharing your opinions about education with us. Now we would like to ask you a few general questions about education in Texas.

Q16. How would you rate the options for attending college in Texas? Are they excellent, good, not very good, or poor?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Excellent	34%	37%	33%	37%	37%
2. Good	51	47	51	47	49
3. Not very good	8	7	6	8	5
4. Poor	2	3	1	2	4
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	5	5	8	6	5

Q17. Do you think that Texas's state government spends too much, too little, or about the right amount on higher education?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Too much	9%	7%	7%	8%	10%
2. Too little	49	51	52	49	45
3. The right amount	33	29	27	29	36
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	9	13	15	15	9

Q18A. Do you think that the state of Texas provides enough financial aid for students who want to obtain a college degree?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>
1. Yes		41% 40%
2. No	51	48
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	8	13

Q18B. How important is it for the State of Texas to continue providing state-funded financial aid for college students who demonstrate financial need?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>
1. Very important	80%	84%
2. Somewhat important	14	13
3. Not very important	3	1
4. Not at all important	3	2
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA <b>[DON'T READ]</b>	1	1

Q18C. How important is it for the State of Texas to continue providing state-funded financial aid for adult learners who demonstrate financial need?

- |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Very important                     | 75% |
| 2. Somewhat important                 | 17  |
| 3. Not very important                 | 3   |
| 4. Not at all important               | 3   |
| 5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ] | 1   |

Q18D. Would you say that you have the necessary equipment to take a college level course entirely online (for example, a computer, tablet, or other device)?

- |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes                                | 85% |
| 2. No                                 | 15  |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ] | 0   |

Q18E. Would you say that your internet connection is reliable enough to take a college level course entirely online?

- |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes                                | 84% |
| 2. No                                 | 15  |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ] | 1   |

Q18F. Would you say that you are comfortable enough with technology to take a college level course entirely online?

- |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes                                | 82% |
| 2. No                                 | 18  |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ] | 0   |

Q18G. Have you needed to purchase new equipment (for example, a computer, tablet, monitor, or some other device) in order to continue to work or go to school online during the pandemic?

- |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes                                | 36% |
| 2. No                                 | 64  |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ] | 1   |

Q18H\_A. [ASK IF Q18G = "1. YES"] And was that purchase for work, school, or both? (N=243, Margin of Error is +/- 6.3%)

- |                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. Work                 | 32% |
| 2. School               | 28  |
| 3. Both work and school | 40  |

Q18H\_B. [ASK IF Q18G = "1. YES"] Were you reimbursed by your employer or school for that purchase or those purchases? (N=243, Margin of Error is +/- 6.3%)

1. Yes		8%
2. No	87	
3. Some, but not others	2	
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ]	2	

Q18H\_C. [ASK IF Q18G = "1. YES"] Was the purchase of additional technology to continue to work or go to school online a financial hardship for you? (N=243, Margin of Error is +/- 6.3%)

1. Yes		43%
2. No	57	
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ]	1	

Q18H\_D. Have you needed to upgrade your home internet service in order to continue working from home or going to school online during the pandemic?

1. Yes		24%
2. No	76	
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ]	1	

Q18I. Thinking about your own situation, which of the following have you experienced since the beginning of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic?

Have you...[Repeat as necessary] [RANDOMIZE B-I]

	Yes	No
A. Or someone in your household contracted COVID	19%	81%
B. Been unable to pay a utility or other bill	17	83
C. Lost a job	23	77
D. Lost savings or retirement funds	24	76
E. Been unable to pay rent or a house payment	14	86
F. Been unable to find or maintain childcare you can afford	8	92
G. Had an interruption in your higher education or certificate training	11	89
H. Had an interruption in the higher education or certificate training of a family member	15	85
I. Had an interruption in the K-12 education of a child in your household	18	82

Q19. Do you personally view the problem of student loan debt for people in the United States to be a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Major problem	76%	79%	73%	78%	72%
2. Minor problem	17	13	17	15	18
3. Not a problem	7	7	6	6	8
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1	1	4	2	2

Q20. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *For Texas' economy to compete with other states, it is essential to have an educated workforce?*

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Agree	93%	93%	90%	93%	93%
2. Disagree	6	5	8	6	7
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	0	1	2	1	1

*Now I'd like to ask you about online education.*

Q21. If you were intending to get a college degree or certificate today, given your own circumstances, would you prefer to get that degree or certificate from a quality online program, or a quality, traditional, in-person program?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Online degree program	40%	36%	28%	25%	31%
2. In-person degree program	57	57	65	67	63
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	3	7	7	7	6

Q22. Generally speaking, do you think that online college degree or certificate programs are better, about the same, or worse than traditional, in-person programs?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. Better	7%	8%	7%	6%	10%
2. About the same	52	54	42	49	50
3. Worse	38	31	37	38	34
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	3	6	14	7	6

Q23. Generally speaking, do you think that employers rate an applicant who has received their college degree or certificate from an online program the same, better, or worse than a similar applicant who has received their degree or certificate from a traditional, in-person program?

	<b>'21</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'15</b>
1. The same	50%	49%	36%	38%	41%
2. Better	6	8	3	5	10
3. Worse	39	43	47	46	41
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	5	0	14	11	8

*We're almost done. The final questions are for statistical purposes...*

AGEG.

1. 18-29	24%
2. 30-44	27
3. 45-64	32
4. 65+	17

EMPLOY. Which of the following best describes your employment status? **[READ CATEGORIES]**

1. Employed, working 40 or more hours per week	50%
2. Employed, working 1-39 hours per week	13
3. Not employed, looking for work	10
4. Not employed, not looking for work	5
5. Retired	17
6. Disabled, not able to work	4
7. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA <b>[DON'T READ]</b>	1

MARRIED. What is your current marital status?

1. Never married	30%
2. Married	49
3. Divorced	12
4. Widowed	5
5. Separated	2
6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	2

CHILD. How many children are currently living with you?

1. One	15%
2. Two	16
3. Three	8
4. Four or more	4
5. None	56
6. REFUSED	1



PARENTS. Do either of your parents have a certificate, certification, or degree beyond high school.

1. Yes	49%
2. No	49
3. Don't know	2

INCOME. What was your total household income for 2020? **[READ CATEGORIES]**

1. Less than \$15,000	7%
2. \$15,000 - less than \$25,000	8
3. \$25,000 - less than \$40,000	15
4. \$40,000 - less than \$75,000	19
5. \$75,000- less than \$150,000	28
6. \$150,000 or more	14
7. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. <b>[DON'T READ]</b>	9

DEBT. **[ASK IF Q4==3|4|5|6]** Do you happen to know approximately how much money you borrowed to finance your education? Was it... **[READ]**?

1. Less than \$10,000	35%
2. Between \$10,000 and \$20,000	16
3. Between \$20,000 and \$30,000	10
4. Between \$30,000 and \$40,000, or	6
5. More than \$40,000	10
6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. <b>(VOL.)</b>	22

MAJOR. **[ASK IF Q4==5|6]** What was your major field of study in college? **[READ RESPONSE OPTIONS]** (*N=396, Margin of Error is +/- 4.9%*)

1. Science, Engineering, or IT	24%
2. Social Science, Liberal Arts, or Education	35
3. Business	23
4. Health	6
5. (Other)	12

ONEDU. These days many colleges and universities offer courses online. Have you ever taken a course online?

1. Yes	47%
2. No	52
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	2

LOCATE. Would you say that you live in an urban, suburban, or rural community?

1. Urban	37%
2. Suburban	41
3. Rural	22

RACE. Would you say that you are...

1. White/Anglo	45%
2. African American	12
3. Hispanic	36
4. Other	7

GENDER. (BY OBSERVATION)

1. MALE	49%
2. FEMALE	51