College students are older than you may think.

- The average age is 26. More than 14 million undergraduates are enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. About 47% are of “traditional” age (19 – 23 years old), but another 43% are 24 or older.
  
  SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics

Students don’t spend a lot of time studying.

- About 35% of college students report they study less than 10 hours a week. Nearly 60% report that they study less than 15 hours a week.
  
  SOURCE: National Survey of Student Engagement 2004

America’s college graduation rate is no longer the world’s highest.

- The United States is now 5\textsuperscript{th} in the world in college graduation rates, falling behind Great Britain, Finland, the Netherlands, and New Zealand.
  
  SOURCE: National Commission on the High School Senior Year, “Raising Our Sights: No High School Senior Left Behind Final Report”

College is becoming less affordable for most American families.

- Low-income families are hit hardest. In 1980, the cost of attending a 2-year public college for low-income families represented 6% of their income, today it’s 12%.
  For a 4-year public college, it was 13% in 1980, today it’s 25%.
  

Today students work more and borrow more to pay for college.

- Sixty-eight percent of undergraduates work 16 or more hours per week, 36% work 36 or more hours per week.
  

- About 65% of students graduate with student loan debt; the average debt has nearly doubled over the past eight years to $16,928.
  

The best predictor of whether or not you’ll go to college is family income.

- Only about 50% of high school graduates from low-income families go on to college, but nearly 90% of high school graduates from high-income families do.
  
  SOURCE: Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, “Access Denied: Restoring the Nation’s Commitment to Equal Educational Opportunity”

- 75% percent of the students attending the 146 most selective colleges in the U.S. are from the highest income quartile; only 3% from the lowest income quartile.
  
  SOURCE: The Century Foundation, “Socio-economic Status, Race/Ethnicity and Selective College Admissions”

- The lowest achieving affluent student has as good of a chance of attending college as the highest achieving low-income student.
  
  SOURCE: Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, “Access Denied: Restoring the Nation’s Commitment to Equal Educational Opportunity”

Higher education is big business.
Higher education employs about 3 million people, including more than 600,000 full-time faculty members and untold numbers of part-time teachers. In all, it is about a $175 billion business.

**The number of people going to college has grown astronomically over the last century.**

- At the turn of the century, only about 2% percent of the college-age population was enrolled in higher education. Today that number is close to 40%.
  
  SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics; Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac 2004-2005

- The number of people attending college in America (including graduate students) has quadrupled since 1960 from 3,639,847 to 16,611,711.
  
  SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics

**How does Oregon measure up.**

- The chance of enrolling in college by age 19 has declined by 18%—one of the steepest declines among the states on this measure. The state’s decrease is due to a decline in the percentage of students graduating from high school, and a drop in the percentage of graduates going on to college.

- Compared with best-performing states, families in Oregon devote a very large share of family income, even after financial aid, to attend public two- and four-year colleges and universities, which enroll 85% of college students in the state.

- Over the past several years, the share of family income, even after financial aid, needed to pay for college expenses has increased from 21% to 30% at community colleges, and increased substantially from 25% to 36% at public four-year institutions.

- A very large percentage (76%) of freshmen at four-year colleges and universities return for their sophomore year.

- The percentage of first-time, fulltime college students who complete a bachelor’s degree within six years of enrolling in college is large (55%).
  
  SOURCE: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

- Between the 2005/06 and 2006/07 academic years, tuition for resident undergraduates at comprehensive 4-year institutions increased 17.4%, the highest increase among all states.

- In the 2006/07 academic years, tuition for resident undergraduates at comprehensive 4-year institutions was $5,551, ranking it 16th among states.
  
  SOURCE: Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board