

FOR SIGMA NU FRATERNITY

# The Value of the Fraternity Experience: Current Research Trends in Higher Education and Greek Life

Dawn Wiese, Ph.D. – January 10, 2022

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# What we'll discuss this evening

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Higher ed demographic trends pre-COVID

Higher ed demographic trends at present

Campus trends in a post-pandemic US

Higher ed cost pressures

Fraternal Research

Implications

# Where were we January 2020?

Demographic cliff

Northeast and Midwest

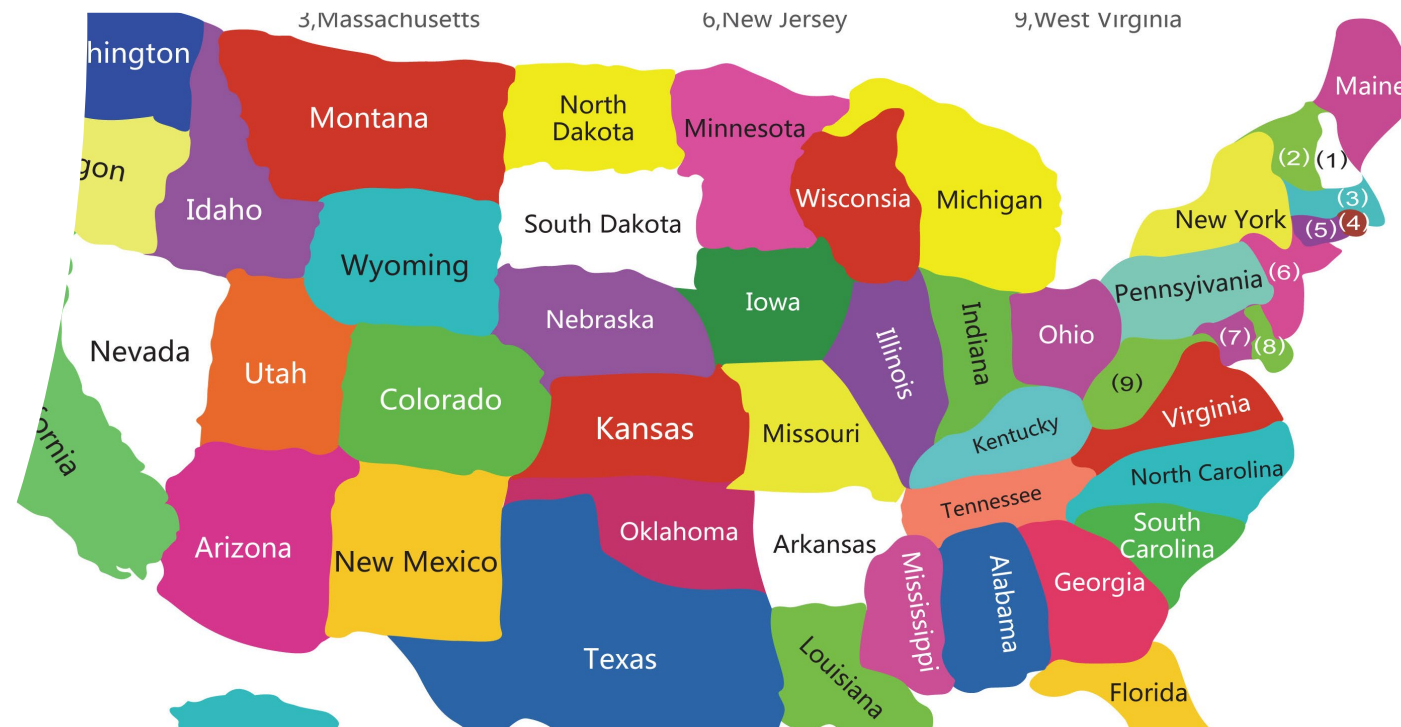
- Precipitous drop
- Serious concerns

West

- Stable to dropping
- California dropping
- Mountain states experiencing some growth

Southeast + Texas

- Growth states



# Demographics, Enrollment, & Migration

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Decades-long patterns in fertility, migration and immigration nudging US toward the Hispanic Southwest

High-aid/high-tuition modeling has already been problematic

Northeast and Midwest – traditional higher education strongholds – anticipate loss of 5% of college population between now and mid-2020s

Great Recession – further plummeting birth rates – decrease by 12% since 2007

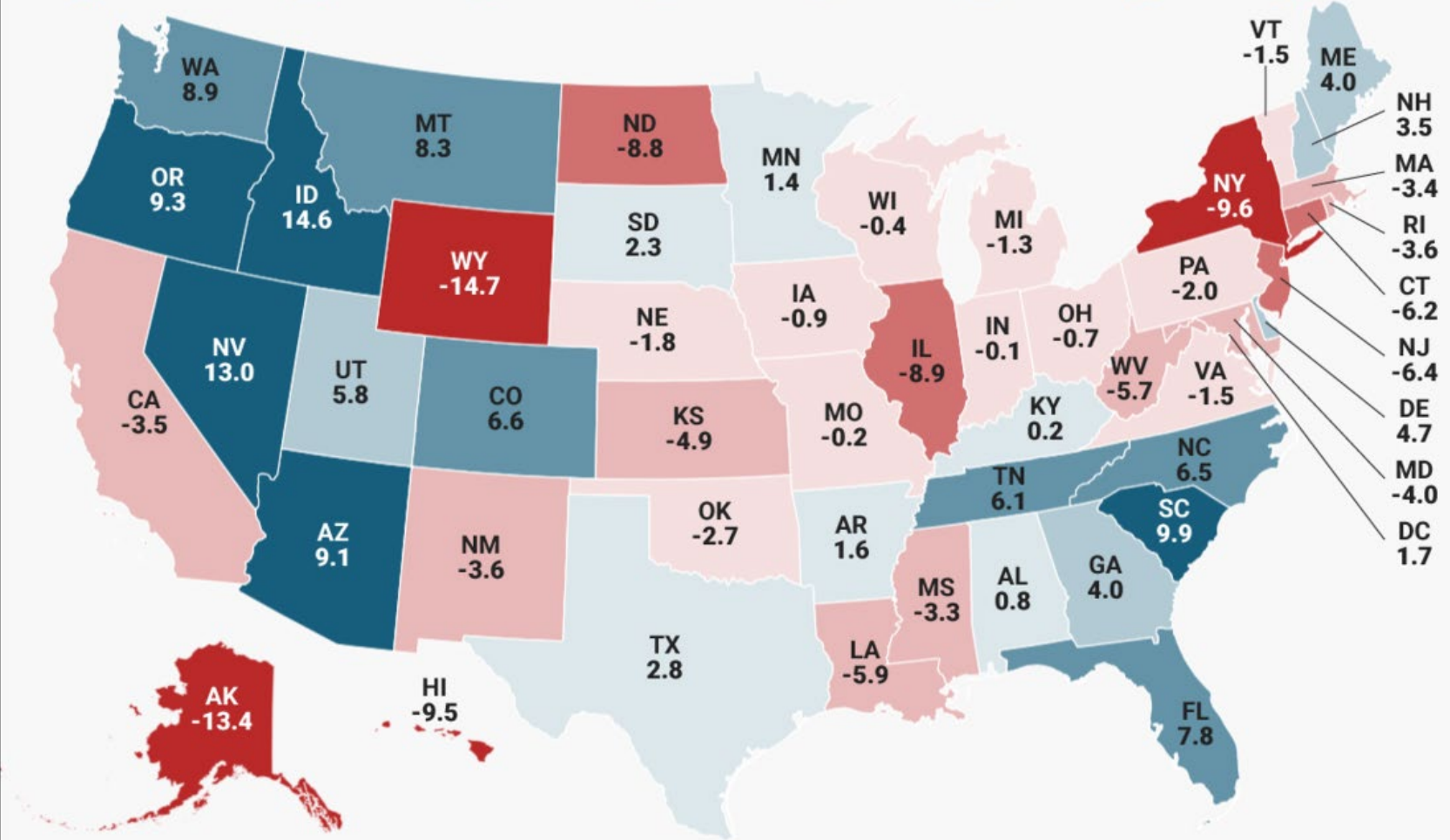
By 2026, the new “birth dearth” reaches college campuses dropping enrollment by an additional 15%



# NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION

NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION PER 1,000 RESIDENTS, JULY 1, 2016 – JULY 1, 2017

Legend: -14.7 – -9 (Dark Red), -9 – -6 (Red), -6 – -3 (Light Red), -3 – 0 (Pink), 0 – 3 (Light Blue), 3 – 6 (Medium Blue), 6 – 9 (Dark Blue), 9 – 14.6 (Darkest Blue)



# Demographics, Enrollment, & Migration

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- Past 25 years, fertility rates for Hispanic and non-Hispanic black women have exceeded the national average
- Non-Hispanic black women now within the mean
- Non-Hispanic white women fall 5 – 10% below national average
- Total fertility rate of Hispanic women is 25% higher than that for non-Hispanic white women

# Demographics, Enrollment, & Migration

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- Non-Hispanic white students from public schools – steady decline
- Current largest source of college students
- 265,000 fewer graduates from this sub-group

# Demographics + Demand

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- Higher Education Index Demand (HEDI)
- Education Longitudinal Study
- Estimates college-going based on demographic variables
- Future demand dependent upon type of institution and location



# Demographics + Demand

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HEDI estimates college-going conditional upon

- Sex
- Race/ethnicity
- Parent education
- Geographic location
- Family income
- Family composition
- Nativity

# Demographics + Demand

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Even within a state or region, children of different backgrounds do not enter into the “demand” equation equally

It’s not about college-aged children – it’s about college-bound children.

And then,

- 2-year?
- 4-year?
- 4-year by institutional type?

Family income, race-ethnicity and parent education are greatest predictors for college attendance

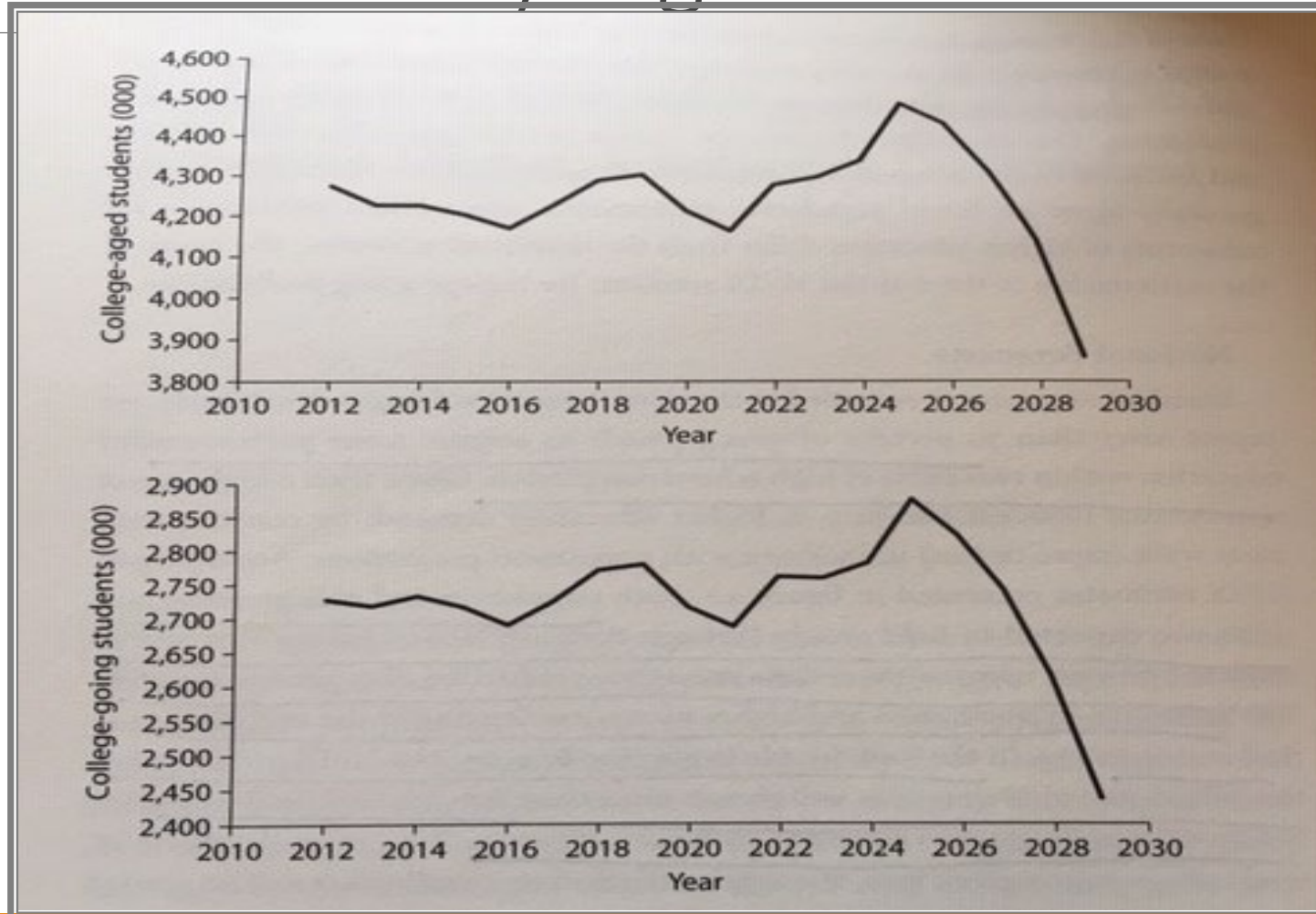
# Demographics + Demand

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- Geographic, birth rate and race/ethnicity trends suggest fewer college students in the future
- Rising parental education suggests the opposite
- However, positive effects of parental education are overwhelmed by birth dearth, immigration and migration patterns

# Demographics + Demand

## HEDI Forecast by High School Graduation Year



Where *were* we  
January 2020?

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Flagships/Elites

“Almost” flagships

Regionals

Community college



# Where *are* we with the pandemic?

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## From L.A. to Boise: How Migration Has Changed During the COVID-19 Pandemic

[Peter H. Haslag](#), Vanderbilt University - Finance

[Daniel Weagley](#), Georgia Institute of Technology - Scheller College of Business

Date Published: April 2021

### **Abstract**

We provide an initial assessment of how migration patterns and migrants motivations for moving have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. We use proprietary data on over 300,000 residential, interstate moves over the last four years, which includes details on each move as well as detailed survey data. We find 10--20% of moves between April 2020--February 2021 were influenced by COVID-19, with a significant shift in migration towards smaller cities, lower cost of living locations, and locations with fewer pandemic-related restrictions. We find very different patterns across higher-income and lower-income migrants with higher income households moving out of more populous cities at greater rates, and moving more for lifestyle reasons and much less for work-related reasons compared to the pre-pandemic period. Our results have implications for the structure of cities, tax and political bases, real estate, and other outcomes of interest.

# Where *are* we with the pandemic?

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## **From L.A. to Boise: How Migration Has Changed During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

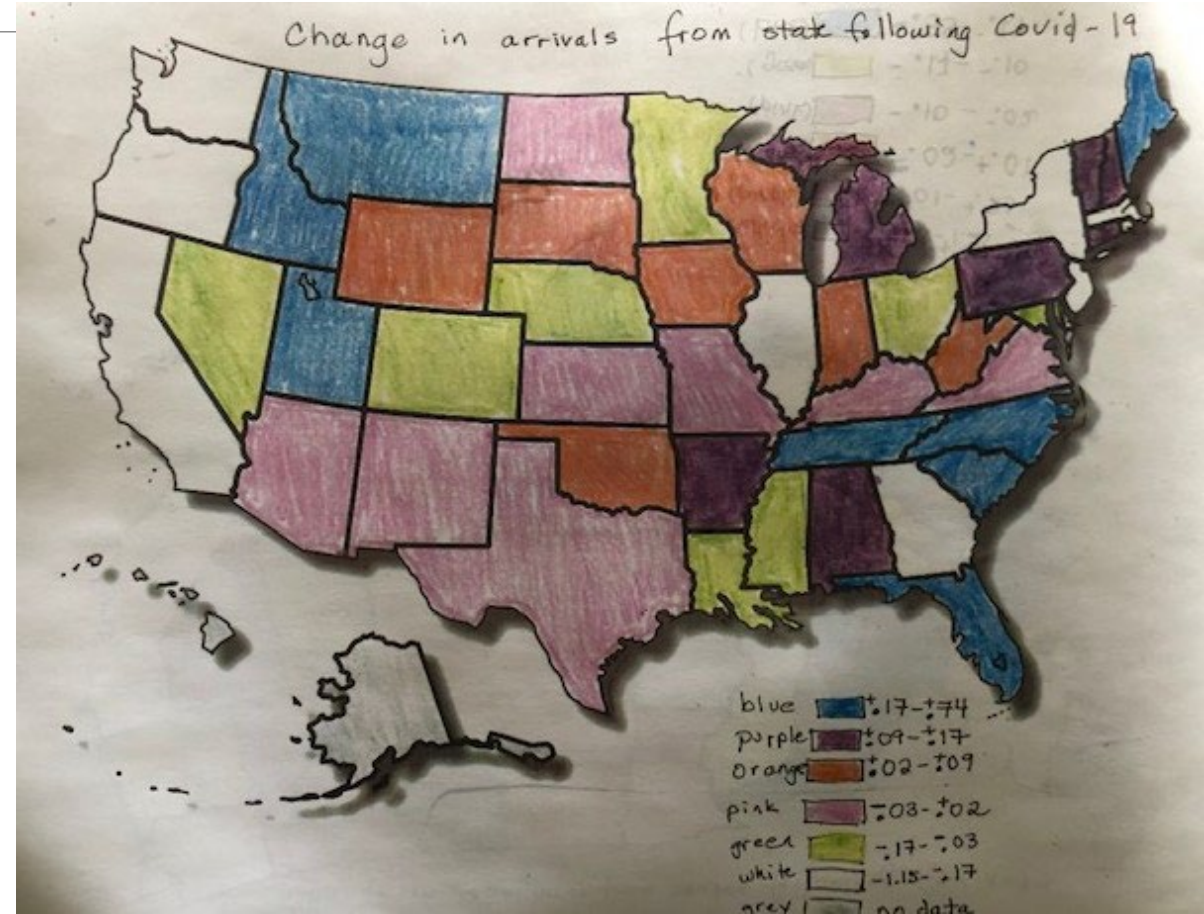
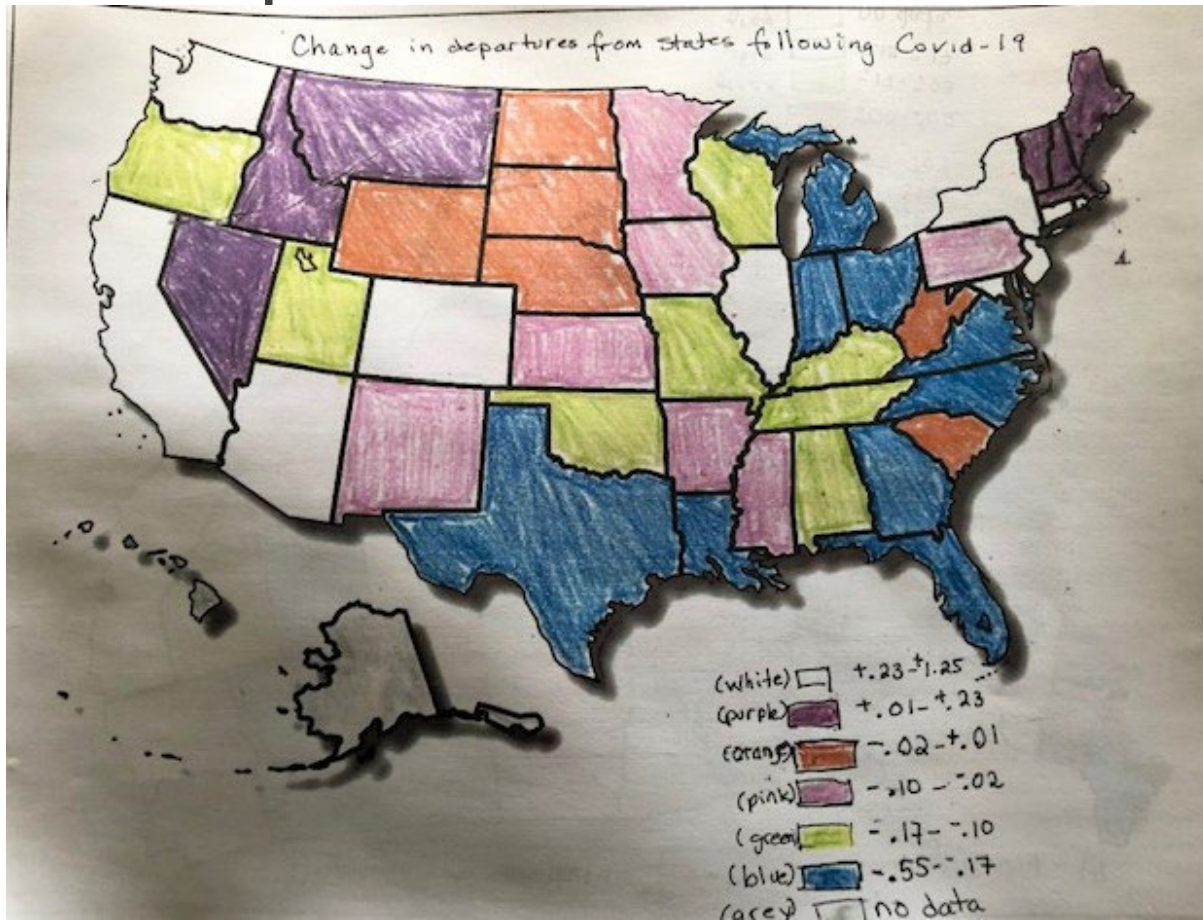
migration patterns and migrant motivations for moving have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic

over 300,000 residential, interstate moves over the last four years, which includes details on each move as well as detailed survey data

shift in migration towards

- smaller cities
- lower cost of living locations
- locations with fewer pandemic-related restrictions
- higher income households moving out of more populous cities
- moving more for lifestyle reasons and much less for work-related

# April 2021





April 2021

Growth areas

- Southeast (other than Georgia)
- Texas
- Utah
- Idaho
- Montana

Why is this important?

Understanding where your organization may be strongest

Infrastructure



Will colleges and universities stay as an online experience?

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Yes

No

Hybrid!



## Online versus In-person education

Most students want to return to in-person instruction

79% of students still want lectures to be available online

Use of AI to individualize the learning experience



# Online versus In-person instruction

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## Welcome to SFA Online

8-week and 16-week calendars

Online and In-person instruction

*“advance your education to create a better life for you, your family, your community and the world....more than 20 online degree programs, SFA Online provides options to make higher education more accessible ....no matter where you are”*



# Online versus In-person instruction

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## University of Arizona

online education degree

12 degrees at the associate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral level.

5-week, 6-week, and 16-week classes



Where *were* we  
January 2020?

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Out-of-control cost

Questions regarding value of  
degree



# Higher ed and financial modeling

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- Continued cuts in public higher education
- Private higher education divided between “haves” and “have nots”
- Tuition discounting to attract students
- Only 27 percent of CFOs express strong confidence in the viability of their institution's financial model over five years
- Only 13 percent express confidence when asked to look out over a 10-year horizon
- 6 in 10 CFOs disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that "reports that a significant number of higher education institutions are facing existential financial crisis are overblown."

# Higher ed and financial modeling

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- Moody's Investors Service - a “negative” outlook on the entire higher education sector
- Net-tuition revenue—the cash colleges have left after giving out financial aid—is essentially flat or declining on too many campuses



# Higher Ed and financial modeling

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For publics ...

- State appropriations have not kept up with inflation or enrollment increases
- State spending (per student) is at its lowest since 1980 (adjusted for inflation)
- 10 years ago students paid about one-third the cost of their education
- Today, in nearly half of states, students pay for most of their education
- Colorado is expected to be the first state where aid to higher education will reach zero
- By 2050, 15 other states are expected to be there including South Carolina, Massachusetts and Virginia

# College closures

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[How many colleges and universities have closed since 2016? | Higher Ed Dive](#)



## The new price war

Corporate degrees

Lower-cost, online programs

Changes within states

Free community college

## The new price war



Google now treating their tech certificates as equivalent to degrees

130 other companies are recognizing Google's certifications

250,000 people have taken one of Google's certification programs

57% of these individuals did not have a college degree

## The new price war



Employers investing in education-as-a-benefit program

Almost exclusively non-traditional and/or fully online programs

Continue to weaken the market for residential 4-year programs

## The new price war

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### **The North Carolina Promise**

three UNC System institutions

significantly reduced student tuition cost to \$500 per semester

increased educational access

reduce student debt

grow the state's economy



# North Carolina Promise

	UNC Asheville	UNC Greensboro
2018	3762	20,106
2019	3600	20,196
2020	3363	19,764
% decrease	-6.6%	-2.1%

	Elizabeth City	UNC Pembroke	Western Carolina
2018	1677	7137	11,639
2019	1769	7698	12,167
2020	2002	8262	12,243
% increase	+13.2%	+7.3%	+6%

# The new price war

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## Community Colleges

### *Biden Directs Education Funding to Community Colleges - Apr 2021*

President Biden's proposal calls for community college to be free for all Americans, which may relieve some of the burdens saddling low-income and working-class college students.

### *The Road Ahead for Community Colleges – Jan 2022*

“....community and technical colleges, which have seen enrollments drop dramatically as their students — often the populations most affected by Covid — grapple with the effects of the pandemic in their personal and professional lives.”





Where the strength  
remains

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Elites

Flagships

“Almost Flagships”



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# Fraternal research

2-3% of higher education research is related to fraternity/sorority

Most of that focuses on alcohol and hazing

“Good news” not being studied/promoted to the same degree

Effort to balance this equation

Academic, personal, social development



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# Mission of FSL

The socially driven purpose of fraternity/sorority organizations on college campuses, in addition to complementing the academic commitment of their home institution, highlights their focus on cultivating leadership skills, serving the community, and developing interpersonal connections

Gregory, D. E., & Janosik, S. M. (2003). The effect of the Clery Act on campus judicial practices. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(6), 763-778.

# Some findings about FSL

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DeBard and Sacks (2011) studied fraternity/sorority membership and academic performance with 17 institutions and more than 45,000 students

Students who joined fraternity/sorority organizations had:

- more credit hours
- higher GPAs than non-affiliated students during their first year of college,
- rejecting the notion that fraternity/sorority-affiliated first-year students attain lower GPAs than non-affiliated students

DeBard, R., & Sacks, C. (2011). Greek membership: The relationship with first-year academic performance. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 13(1), 109-126.

# Some findings about FSL

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Hayek et al. (2002) suggests that fraternity/sororityaffiliated students reported higher communication and critical thinking abilities

Asel et al. (2009) found that membership in a fraternity/sorority organization is associated with an increase in community engagement and community service

Asel, A. M., Seifert, T. A., & Pascarella, E. T. (2009). The effects of fraternity/sorority membership on college experiences and outcomes: A portrait of complexity. *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors*. 4(2), 1-15.

Hayek, J. C., Carini, R. M., O'Day, P. T., & Kuh, G. D. (2002). Triumph or tragedy: Comparing student engagement levels of members of Greek-letter organizations and other students.

# Alcohol and Other Drugs

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Most studies find members of fraternities and sororities are more likely to consume alcohol

Fournier et al. (2004) implemented an incentive/reward program in which students are rewarded with a cash prize to combat excessive drinking

Clinical results suggest that Fournier's program, especially accurate for students involved in fraternity/sorority life, cut in half the number of students who were legally intoxicated

Fournier, A. K., Ehrhart, I. J., Glindemann, K. E., & Geller, E. S. (2004). Intervening to decrease alcohol abuse at university parties: Differential reinforcement of intoxication level. *Behavior modification*, 28(2), 167-181.

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# Gallup

Fraternities and Sororities:  
Understanding Life Outcomes (2014  
and 2021)

From interviews with more than  
30,000 graduates, the Gallup-Purdue  
Index measures

<https://www.gallup.com/services/176279/fraternities-sororities-understanding-life-outcomes.aspx>

# Gallup

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Based on Gallup's 30 years of research on engagement in the workplace, Gallup identified 12 elements that predict employee and workgroup performance

Gallup also studied five areas of well-being: Purpose, Social, Financial, Community and Physical

Well-being is the combination of all the things that are important to each individual — it is how people think about and experience their lives

Previous Gallup research indicates, 29% of people in the U.S. *are not thriving in any of the five elements of well-being*



# Gallup

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Where graduates went to college — public or private, small or large, very selective or not selective — hardly matters at all to their current well-being and their work lives in comparison to their experiences in college

Fraternity and sorority members are more likely than all other college graduates to be thriving in each of the five elements of well-being (purpose, social, financial, community, and physical)

More fraternity and sorority members are thriving in “purpose” than in any other element of well-being

These fraternity and sorority members like what they do every day and get to learn or do something interesting on a daily basis with 59% thriving in this element of well-being (non-members at 54%)

# Gallup

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More fraternity and sorority members are thriving in the element of “social” well-being than all other college graduates

More than half (54%) of fraternity and sorority members have strong relationships with friends and family that lead them to be thriving in the area of social well-being, compared to less than half of all other college graduates (48%)

Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to be thriving in the element of “financial” well-being than all other college graduates (46% vs. 42%)

Fraternity and sorority members are also more likely to be thriving in “community” well-being than all other college graduates (52% vs. 46%)

Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to be thriving in the element of “physical” well-being than all other college graduates (37% vs. 34%), although fewer fraternity and sorority members are thriving in physical well-being than in any other element

# Gallup

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More fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that they had professors who cared about them as a person, one who made them excited about learning, and had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their dreams, than all other college graduates (16% vs. 13%)

Fraternity and sorority members say they had at least one professor who made them excited about learning (66% vs. 63%) and had a mentor who encouraged their goals and dreams (25% vs. 21%)

Fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that they had a long-term project that took a semester or more to complete, that they had an internship or job where they applied what they were learning, and that they were extremely involved in extracurricular activities and organizations, than other college graduates (11% vs. 5%)

# Gallup

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Alumni who were members of a fraternity or sorority exhibit higher emotional attachment to their alma mater, meaning that they strongly agree that their college or university was the perfect school for them, and they can't imagine a world without it

Twenty-two percent of fraternity and sorority members are emotionally attached to their alma mater, compared with 17% of all other college graduates

More fraternity and sorority members report that they have started a business than all other college graduates (28% vs. 23%)

More fraternity and sorority members (37%) strongly agree that their institution prepared them for life after college than all other college graduates (27%)

Differences between fraternity and sorority members and all other college graduates are statistically significant in favor of fraternity/sorority members when controlling for key demographic characteristics including gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as measured by first generation education status

# Pike (2020)

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Pike, G. (March 2020). *The Greek Experience Revisited: The Relationships between Fraternity/Sorority Membership and Student Engagement, Learning Outcomes, Grades, and Satisfaction with College*. [pre-publication]

The results of the research indicated that fraternity and sorority members were:

- *significantly more engaged than non-members,*
- *reported greater gains in learning, and*
- *were more satisfied with their college experiences*

# Pike (2020)

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## Where the information comes from:

Data used in this research came from the 2014 and 2017 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Complete data were available for **202,586 students attending 541 institutions** that participated in NSSE 2014 & 2017

The 2014 and 2017 cross-validation samples were drawn from 332 college and universities participating in both survey administrations and included 105,825 students in 2014 and 134,335 students in 2017

The student engagement measures used in the research were 10 engagement indicators from the NSSE questionnaire, along with a measure of the number of high-impact educational practices in which the students participated

College outcomes were represented by students' self-reports of their learning and development, self-reported grades, and a measure of satisfaction with college

The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling to identify the direct and indirect relationships between membership in a fraternity or sorority and both student engagement and college outcomes

**Separate analyses were conducted for first-year males, senior males, first-year females, and senior females.**

Studying the engagement indicators, focus specifically on:

**High impact practices**

**Student-Faculty interaction**

**Discussion with diverse others**

**Collaborative learning**

**Supportive campus environment**

# Pike (2020)

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F/S reported greater gains in learning

F/S were more satisfied with their college experiences

F/S indirectly improved learning gains, acting through higher levels of student engagement

Despite being less diverse than students in general, fraternity/sorority members reported higher levels of interaction with people different from themselves than did other students

# Pike (2020)

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*F/S reported having lower grades than non-members*

These results were not significantly different for the 2014 or 2017 administrations of the NSSE survey

The pattern of results for the matched groups of fraternity/sorority members and nonmembers was virtually identical to the results obtained from structural equation modeling

*However, follow-up tests revealed that these results could be the product of variables that were not included in the study*



# Pike (2020)

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The findings of this study indicate that fraternities and sororities are not antithetical to the values of American higher education, as some have suggested

To the contrary, membership in a fraternity or sorority is associated with:

- *greater involvement in curricular and cocurricular activities,*
- *promotes student learning and development, and*
- *promotes satisfaction with the college experiences*

Furthermore, the largest positive effects were *generally found for first-year students, arguing against deferring recruitment until the second semester or second year*

# Mental Health

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- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students report lower mean scores related to depression and anxiety.
- For depression, this was consistent for affiliated male and affiliated female students in comparison to their unaffiliated peers of similar gender identities
- Significant differences were not observed for mean anxiety scores when considering affiliation and gender
- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students have lower lifetime diagnosis of depression by a medical professional, but higher lifetime diagnosis of anxiety
- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students have higher rates of lifetime use of therapy or counseling, but lower rates of current use of therapy or counseling
- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students have a higher positive rating of campus support systems, but lower knowledge of where to go to access mental health services if needed

# Mental Health

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## About the Study

Analyzed by the Post-Secondary Education Research Center  
University of Tennessee- Knoxville  
Team Leader: Dr. Patrick Biddix  
Researchers: Dr. Meghan Grace, Dr. Amanda Assalone

## Survey Details

Data from “Healthy Minds” Study – a national data set conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan

The 2018-2019 sample included 78 participating institutions and 41,302 student respondents

The findings were not consistent for affiliated non-binary students

# Key Takeaways – Greek Life

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Fraternity and sorority members tend to be happier, are more involved, and have better educational experiences than non-affiliated students

Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to be retained and graduate

There is not support for deferred recruitment

Alumni of the fraternal experience demonstrate increased life satisfaction than student who did not participate in fraternity/sorority as undergraduates

Alumni also feel more connected to their alma maters

Fraternity and sorority members experience better mental health than non-affiliated students

# Key Takeaways – Greek Life

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3x more likely to obtain an internship while in college

2x as likely to encourage others to attend their alma mater

5x as likely to give back financially to their alma mater

Almost twice as likely to have a job waiting for them when they graduate

Almost 5x as likely to be satisfied with their lives as alums

Controlled for demographic variables including socioeconomic and racial differences

# Key Takeaways – higher ed

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Significantly fewer students across the United States

Regional public colleges and universities (lower tier) are in danger

Struggling private colleges are in critical danger

Those same institutions in the Northeast and Midwest are in the most danger

Little indication college costs are decreasing

Services you can provide for students are an advantage

Consider using simplified measure of institutional type (Elite, National, Regional) for growth

Focus on Elites and Nationals – across the nation

Begin tracking endowments, TDR, enrollments/over time, rapid tuition increases

# Key Takeaways - overall

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College students, like all people, are sometimes subject to poor decision making

Fraternity and sorority members are a sub-set of all college students

Data overwhelmingly support the fraternal experience

This does not mean that issues of concern – sexual misconduct, alcohol/other drugs, hazing, etc. – shouldn't be a part of the educational mission within the fraternal experience

Some colleges and universities choose to collaborate with fraternities and sororities for a developmentally productive experience for these students, or

Some colleges and universities choose to take a hard stance on fraternities and sororities

Fraternities and sororities should actively advocate for the good they offer on campuses and be armed with data to support their position

# Key Takeaways – for Sigma Nu

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Your campus footprint:

Are you adjusting with existing and new chapters for demographic and migration patterns?

Are you familiar with how your campus footprint is adjusting to demographic changes?

Are you adjusting your support of chapters/expansion based on changes within your footprint?

Are you marketing the “value add” that fraternity offers?

Are you focusing on networking/career/internships and using technology to do so?



# Key Takeaways – for Sigma Nu

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Chapter Homes should be up-to-date with the latest technology

Anticipate continued staffing cuts on campuses

F/S provides benefits to campuses:

- social connection
- career/networking
- internships, and
- scholarship opportunities
- Not to mention retaining students and providing more supportive alumni through both dollars and as net promoters