



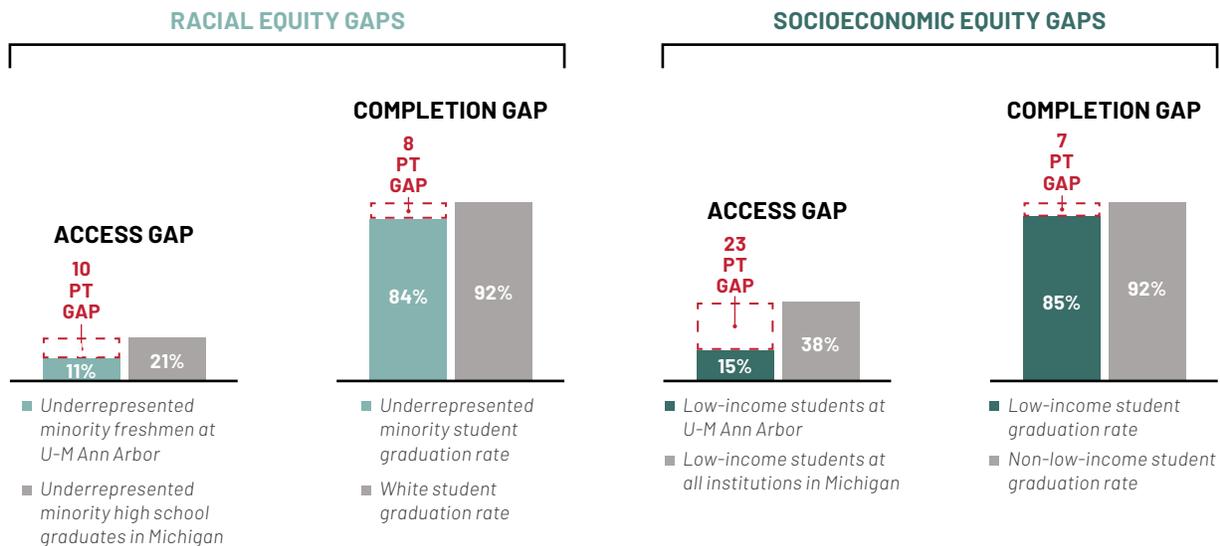
Equity Snapshot

University of Michigan – Ann Arbor

Public flagship universities were established to provide an excellent education to their states' residents and are therefore well-positioned to enhance social and economic mobility within their states. Yet in many cases, too few low-income students and students of color have access to these elite colleges and the opportunities they provide. This analysis of racial and socioeconomic equity at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor (U-M Ann Arbor) finds large and growing gaps in college access, as well as troubling gaps in college completion, by race and socioeconomic status (Figure 1). To serve as a catalyst for mobility and equity in the state of Michigan, U-M Ann Arbor must do a better job enrolling and graduating low-income students¹ and students of color.

EQUITY AT A GLANCE

Figure 1. Racial and Socioeconomic Equity Gaps in Access and Completion at U-M Ann Arbor, 2016



Racial equity gaps: IHEP analysis of first-time, full- and part-time undergraduate fall enrollment, 2016 IPEDS data and public high school graduates 2015-16 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) data retrieved from <https://knocking.wiche.edu/data/>; IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by race/ethnicity, 2016 IPEDS data. Socioeconomic equity gaps: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduates receiving Pell Grants at U-M Ann Arbor and at public, private not-for-profit, and for-profit two- and four-year Title IV participating institutions in Michigan, 2015-16 IPEDS data; IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by Pell receipt, 2016 IPEDS data.

WHO HAS ACCESS TO U-M ANN ARBOR?

RACIAL EQUITY: More students of color attend U-M Ann Arbor today than 30 years ago, but Black students are nonetheless more underrepresented compared with the state population than they were 15 years ago. Between 1980 and 2016, the number of underrepresented minority students at U-M Ann Arbor nearly tripled, driven in large part by a tenfold increase in Hispanic student enrollment (Figure 2). See sidebox, “Who are Underrepresented Minority Students?”

Yet U-M Ann Arbor’s enrollment of underrepresented minority students has failed to keep pace with the growing racial/ethnic diversity in the state. Since 2001, racial gaps between Michigan’s high school graduates and U-M Ann Arbor’s freshmen class increased (Figure 3).

Black students are especially underrepresented at U-M Ann Arbor. Despite a growing proportion of Black high school graduates in Michigan, the flagship’s enrollment of Black students has declined—perpetuating and worsening the status quo. While 16 percent of high school graduates in Michigan were Black in spring 2016, just 4 percent of the flagship’s freshman class was Black that fall.² In contrast, Hispanic student enrollment at U-M Ann Arbor outpaced Hispanic representation in the state in 2016 (6 percent and 4 percent, respectively; Figure 3).

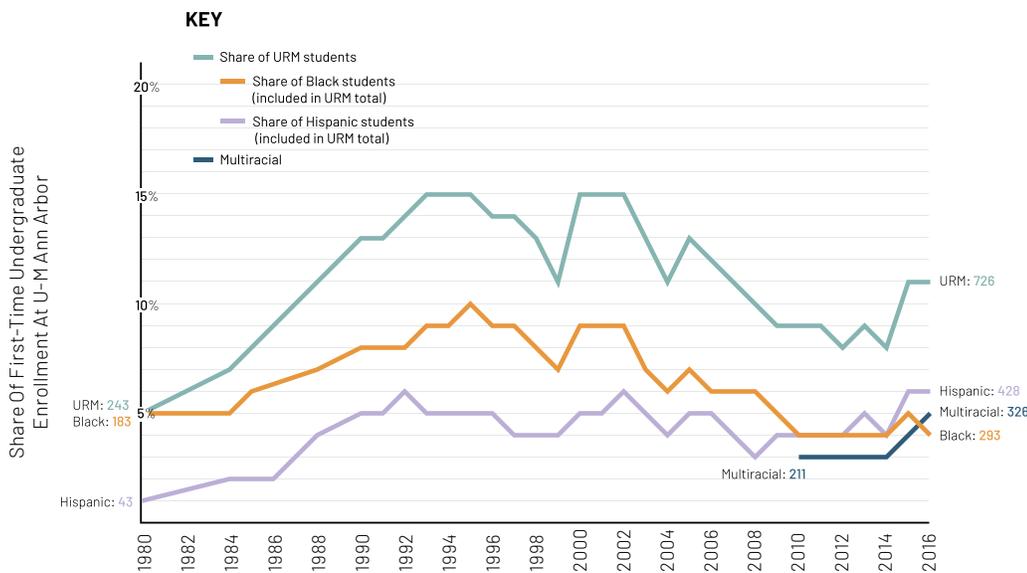


Figure 2.
Change in Racial/Ethnic Diversity at U-M Ann Arbor, 1980–2016

Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full- and part-time undergraduate fall enrollment, 1980–2016 IPEDS data. Note: Cohorts of American Indian/Alaska Native students are too small and therefore not shown separately. However, American Indian/Alaska Native students are included in the underrepresented minority (URM) category.

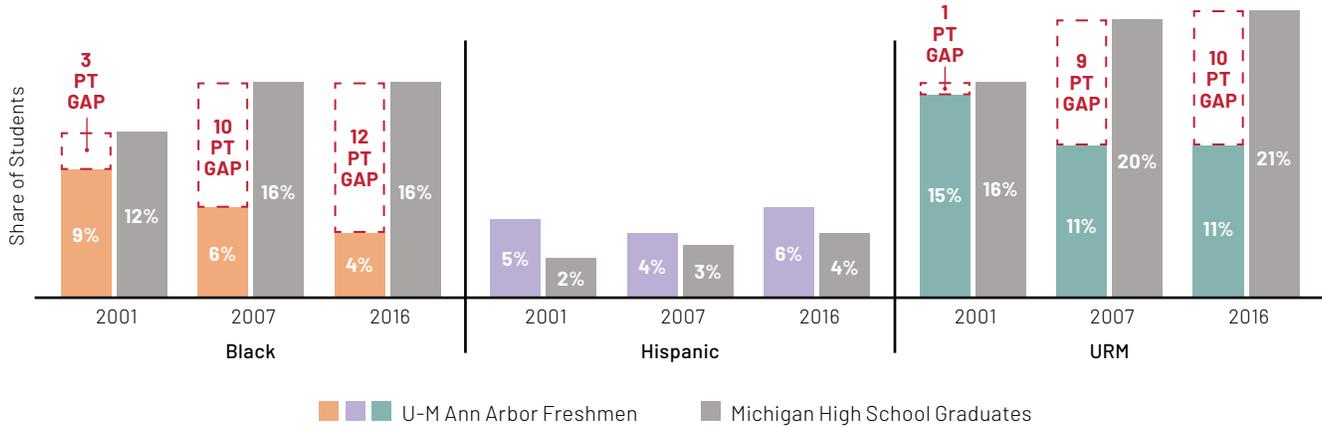
Who are Underrepresented Minority Students?

In this analysis, underrepresented minority (URM) students or students of color refers to Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students. Other populations, such as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asian Americans, and other underserved Asian students, also are underrepresented within higher education and deserve attention.³ However, current data are insufficient to measure access and completion for these critical populations over time.

Also, due to small population sizes and to protect students’ anonymity, this paper includes American Indian/Alaska Native students as part of the collective underrepresented minority group but does not discuss or depict them on their own. In 2016, American Indian/Alaska Native students comprised approximately 1 percent of undergraduates in the United States.⁴ And just 40 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native students at public four-year colleges earned a degree within six years in 2014, compared with 61 percent of White students.⁵

We urge institutions to examine trends for all underrepresented groups to develop recruitment and intervention strategies targeted to their needs.

Figure 3. Change in Racial/Ethnic Gaps Between Michigan High School Graduates and U-M Ann Arbor Undergraduates, 2001, 2007, and 2016



Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full- and part-time undergraduate fall enrollment, 2001-16 IPEDS data and public high school graduates 2000-01 (earliest available data) through 2014-15 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) data retrieved from <https://knocking.wiche.edu/data/>. 2000-01 through 2012-13 data on high school graduates are based on the Common Core of Data (CCD), and 2013-14 through 2015-16 high school graduate data are WICHE projections. Note: IPEDS cohorts of American Indian/Alaska Native students are too small and therefore not shown separately. However, American Indian/Alaska Native students are included in the underrepresented minority (URM) category.

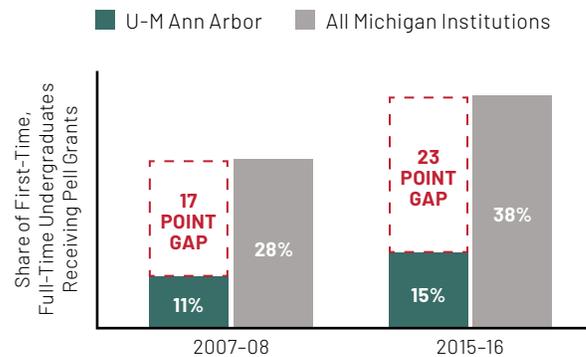
SOCIOECONOMIC EQUITY: U-M Ann Arbor enrolls more low-income students today than it did a decade ago, but these increases have not kept pace with growing enrollments of low-income students in Michigan overall. U-M Ann Arbor enrolls low-income students at less than half the rate of all Michigan colleges (15 percent compared with 38 percent; Figure 4).

In fact, the majority of U-M Ann Arbor students come from high-income backgrounds. Of U-M Ann Arbor students born in 1991, two-thirds have parents in the top income quintile with an annual income of \$111,000 or more. Only 4 percent come from the bottom income quintile with an annual income of \$25,000 or less.⁶



NET PRICE: Price is one barrier to college access for low-income students, yet U-M Ann Arbor keeps prices low for students with limited resources. In 2015-16, the lowest income in-state students at U-M Ann Arbor—those with family incomes of \$30,000 or less—paid about \$2,660 in college expenses after accounting for grant aid.⁷

Figure 4. Change in Socioeconomic Gaps between U-M Ann Arbor and All Michigan Colleges, 2007-08 and 2015-16



Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduates receiving Pell Grants at U-M Ann Arbor and at all public, private not-for-profit, and for-profit two- and four-year Title IV participating institutions in Michigan, 2007-08 to 2015-16 IPEDS data.

WHO SUCCEEDS AT U-M ANN ARBOR?

RACIAL EQUITY: U-M Ann Arbor has made impressive gains in graduation rates for all students, especially students of color. Yet the flagship must continue to improve completion rates for underrepresented minority students to close persistent equity gaps. Over the last two decades, U-M Ann Arbor narrowed graduation-rate gaps between underrepresented minority and White students by 13 percentage points. Graduation-rate gaps between Hispanic and White students have narrowed even more significantly (by nearly 20 percentage points) since 1997 (Figure 5).

Despite these noteworthy improvements, troubling graduation-rate gaps remain, especially between Black students and their White peers. In 2016, U-M Ann Arbor graduated White students at a rate 12 percentage points higher than Black students (Figure 5).

The flagship must continue working to improve completion rates for students of color but do so without increasing admissions requirements that could exclude students poised to benefit from a U-M Ann Arbor education. Indeed, increasing selectivity likely contributed to U-M Ann Arbor's graduation-rate gains over the past several decades. The flagship became more selective, increasing the median SAT/ACT scores of incoming students by approximately 10 percent between 2002 and 2016.⁸ This trend, however, is at odds with the need to enhance socioeconomic and racial diversity.⁹



OUT-OF-STATE ENROLLMENT: Many flagships have increased out-of-state enrollments, a practice that can hurt socioeconomic or racial diversity.¹⁰ In 2016, nearly half (49 percent) of first-time, full-time undergraduates at U-M Ann Arbor were from outside of Michigan, an increase of 11 percentage points since 1986.¹¹

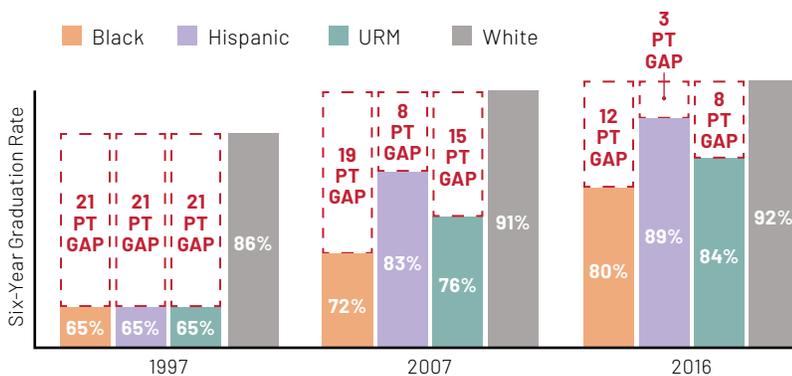


Figure 5. Graduation-Rate Gaps by Race/Ethnicity at U-M Ann Arbor, 1997, 2007, 2016

Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by race/ethnicity, 1997–2016 IPEDS data. Note: Cohorts of American Indian/Alaska Native students are too small and therefore not shown separately. However, American Indian/Alaska Native students are included in the underrepresented minority (URM) category.

SOCIOECONOMIC EQUITY: Low-income students have a lower chance of graduating from U-M Ann Arbor than their higher-income peers. In 2016, U-M Ann Arbor graduated 85 percent of low-income students within six years compared with 92 percent of non-low-income students (Figure 6).

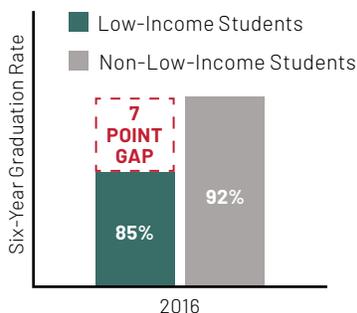


Figure 6. Graduation-Rate Gap by Socioeconomic Status at U-M Ann Arbor, 2016

Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by Pell receipt, 2016 IPEDS data. Data on graduation rates for low-income students became available in 2016, allowing for analysis of socioeconomic gaps in student success at individual institutions.

EQUITY-MINDED POLICIES AT U-M ANN ARBOR

What institutions do matters.

Colleges and universities must commit to increasing racial and economic diversity and supporting students of color and low-income students through to completion. That commitment requires unwavering leadership, alongside a solid financial investment. That institutional commitment plays out in a number of ways, including through university policies, which shape the opportunities available to low-income students and students of color. Public flagship institutions should design admissions and financial aid policies that encourage historically underrepresented students to gain access and succeed at high levels. The checklist below includes examples of policies that can encourage, or impede, enrollment and success for low-income students and students of color. Interviews with Great Lakes flagship administrators provided context on the motivations behind enacting these policies, how they operate in practice, and how they impact equity on campus.

While designing and implementing the policies below can open more opportunities for students of color and low-income students, this list is illustrative—not exhaustive. Furthermore, fully closing gaps in access and completion is about more than checking a handful of policy boxes. Institutions need consistent leadership that sets equity goals as top institutional priorities. Doing so compels administrators, faculty, and staff to re-examine and question all policies and practices—large and small. Institution-wide policies matter, but so do the day-to-day decisions made and priorities set on a campus. As a public university founded on the principal of providing an excellent education to Michiganders, U-M Ann Arbor has a responsibility to examine its policies and practices with the goal of opening doors of opportunity within the state.



NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID

U-M Ann Arbor does not award more than three-quarters of institutional grant aid based on need. Low-income students are sensitive to the price of college and financial aid offers. Need-based grant aid helps ease the financial burden of attending college, promote affordability, and narrow access inequities.¹² In 2015–16, 74 percent of U-M Ann Arbor’s institutional grants (\$134.3 million) were awarded based on need.¹³ Among other financial aid programs, U-M Ann Arbor offers the Go Blue Guarantee, which covers the full cost of in-state tuition and fees for Michigan undergraduate students who have an annual family income of \$65,000 or less.¹⁴



EARLY DECISION

U-M Ann Arbor does not accept early decision applications. Binding early decision policies increase the admissions chances of students who have the preparation and financial means to apply early to only one college and commit to enroll there if admitted, without comparing financial aid packages across multiple institutions. Affluent students are almost twice as likely as low-income students to apply to early decision deadlines, and thus benefit disproportionately from the advantages these policies offer.¹⁵ U-M Ann Arbor does not offer early decision.¹⁶



DEMONSTRATED INTEREST

U-M Ann Arbor considers students' demonstrated interest in the admissions process.

Institutions that favor applicants who show “demonstrated interest” in the school can disadvantage low-income students. While affluent students have the financial means to demonstrate their interest by visiting college campuses, low-income students are often unable to do so because of the high costs associated with these trips.¹⁷ U-M Ann Arbor considers “level of applicant interest” in the admission process, but tailors their expectations for how students of different means are able to “demonstrate” that interest.¹⁸



LEGACY PREFERENCE

U-M Ann Arbor considers legacy status during the admissions process. Legacy admissions policies that give preference to students with familial ties to the institution can increase admissions chances of the children of alumni, a benefit exclusively available to students with college-educated parents.¹⁹ These policies disadvantage low-income students and students of color, who are more likely than their White and non-low-income peers to be the first in their family to attend college.²⁰ U-M Ann Arbor collects information on “alumni/ae relation” in their application process and adjusts communications based on it, but a university administrator noted that legacy status does not factor heavily in admissions decisions.²¹



INTERACTIONS WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

U-M Ann Arbor has not “Banned the Box,” meaning applicants must disclose and provide an explanation of past criminal convictions and pending criminal charges.²² Requiring applicants to check a box disclosing interactions with the criminal justice system, a practice that has not been shown to have any impact on campus safety, disadvantages applicants of color to a larger degree than White students.²³ U-M Ann Arbor asks about a prospective student’s criminal justice involvement on its application, and considers that information after admissions decisions have been made, at which point the university might conduct further evaluation or follow-up. Notably, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)—of which U-M Ann Arbor is a member—recently called on its membership to remove questions about criminal history from applications for admissions.²⁴

Endnotes

1. Low-income students are those who receive Pell Grants. Eighty-two percent of all Pell recipients have incomes below \$40,000. U.S. Department of Education, 2015–16 Federal Pell Grant Program End-Of-Year Report, Table 71. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/finaid/prof/resources/data/2015-2016eoyresearchreports.zip>
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13. IHEP analysis of 2000–16 College InSight data, The Institute for College Access & Success. Retrieved from: <http://college-insight.org>
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