

Issue 6 – Georgia’s Talent Gap: Time to Close It

Issue Overview

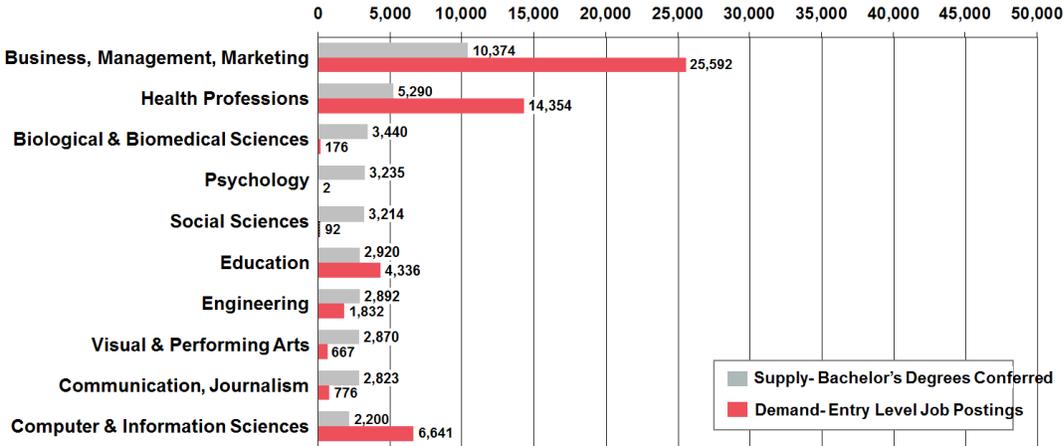
Economic opportunities are on the rise in Georgia as the economy is expanding. Employer job postings have grown over 150% since 2010, outpacing the national growth rate. Meanwhile, Georgia ranks 34th among states for unemployment. Though the number of jobs available is increasing, many potential workers are unemployed or underemployed. These factors indicate that Georgia is experiencing a talent gap, meaning there is a mismatch between the degrees and skills needed by employers and the degrees and skills of the population.

Significance for Georgia

It’s a statistic that many of us know well. By 2020, 60% of jobs in Georgia will require some form of post-secondary education, ranging from a certificate to university degree. Georgia has set a goal to increase the number of post-secondary graduates by 250,000 by the year 2025.

Post-secondary completion is important in Georgia for closing the talent gap. However, enrollment and even completion alone will not do that. Completion is also necessary in a field and of a level (certificate, Associate’s degree, Bachelor’s degree, etc.) that matches job openings and economic trends for the state to address the talent gap. As Georgia moves to increase the number of students successfully transitioning into post-secondary education for a degree, it must be noted that having a credential is not the same as having the *right* credential.

Bachelor’s Degree Talent Gap



In recent years, Georgia has been aggressively putting in place multiple pathways for post-secondary success. The state has been focusing on increasing the rigor of traditional pathways to high school graduation; readying students for post-secondary education; implementing innovative programs that blend high school, career, and post-secondary education.

Action Steps for Georgia

To ensure that Georgia continues to have a prepared workforce and economic opportunities for all, the state must have policies in place that support career education and college preparation, and innovative programs that promote and ensure post-secondary achievement.

Georgia is moving in a positive direction to ensure an internationally competitive, educated citizenry. The state has increased academic expectations of its students and educators. As a result, more students are graduating from high school and going on to post-secondary education. To be a global leader, however, Georgia must take its education system to the next level, broaden the student base to include non-traditional and adult students, and support career development activities that tie post-secondary education more closely to the employment demands of the state.