

GRE® RESEARCH REPORT

Pathways to Graduate School: 2.

A Data Overview of U.S. Prospective Graduate Students by Hispanic Subgroup and Gender



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Pathways to Graduate School: 2. A Data Overview of U.S. Prospective Graduate Students by Hispanic Subgroup and Gender

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Abstract

While discussions around increasing diversity often focus on attracting a broad range of students, the unique needs and challenges of specific groups—such as Hispanic graduate school aspirants—are frequently overlooked. This oversight is problematic given the growing demographic significance of Hispanic individuals in the United States and their underrepresentation in the highest levels of academia. Hispanic graduate students represent a small but vital part of America’s future intellectual capital. Even less frequently explored is the rich heterogeneity of Hispanic graduate school aspirations, with a particular focus on Hispanic subgroup differences and gender. The 120,445 individuals who are U.S. citizens, who provided gender and race/ethnicity information, and had scores on all three *GRE*[®] General Test measures are the subjects for this descriptive study, one of a series of five such reports. GRE General Test data from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2021, supplemented with U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Census data, are analyzed. These individuals, referred to as prospective graduate students (PGS), are examined through six core questions: (a) Who were the PGS? (b) Where did they reside? (c) What were their education and work experiences? (d) What were their undergraduate experiences? (e) What were their plans for graduate study? and (f) What were their emerging graduate school choice sets? Key findings include the following: (a) For Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS, roughly 68% are 25 years of age or younger, with many being under 22 years of age; (b) the three Hispanic PGS groups share six states where they reside in high numbers, but each subgroup has at least one unique state where they are present in significant numbers; (c) across the three groups, more than two-thirds attended a public or private baccalaureate institution in their states of residence; (d) parental education varied across three groups; (e) in all three Hispanic subgroups, more men than women majored in physical sciences

and engineering, while more women than men majored in the life sciences; (f) a master's degree was the most common graduate degree objective, with greater interest for women than for men; and (g) there were considerable differences across the three groups regarding including at least one minority-serving institution in their graduate school choice sets. The report concludes with recommendations for future research and practical applications, particularly in the graduate school application process.

Keywords: Hispanic students, graduate school applications, test measures, GRE®, prospective graduate students, demographics, work experience, undergraduate experience, graduate enrollment, graduate program

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Series Preface

This research report is one of five in the Pathways to Graduate School: A Data Series on U.S. Prospective Graduate Students series, which examines prospective graduate students (PGS) who are U.S. citizens at a time in their educational trajectory that is not commonly explored—when they are considering applying to graduate school. This series is intended to supplement the ETS (2022) report “A Snapshot of the Individuals Who Took the *GRE*[®] General Test July 2016–June 2021,” which presents analyses for all GRE test takers.

The series is intended for individuals and organizations involved in graduate education, such as graduate education institutions, graduate school admissions offices, organizations focused on diversity and inclusion, policymakers and government agencies, and education researchers and analysts who may apply descriptions of domestic subpopulations of the overall GRE test taker population to inform their understanding of and support for various groups within the PGS population. Each report examines the same six questions:

1. Who were the PGS?
2. Where did the PGS reside?
3. What were their education and work experiences?
4. What were their undergraduate experiences?
5. What were PGS’ plans for graduate study?
6. What were their emerging graduate school choice sets?

The five profiles of U.S. citizens are (a) women PGS, (b) PGS by Hispanic subgroup and gender, (c) PGS by parental education and gender, (d) PGS by Pell Grant eligibility and gender, and (e) PGS by Black students and gender.

A total of 1.2 million PGS who took the GRE General Test from 2016 to 2021 and responded to questions on the GRE registration form and the Background Information Questionnaire provided data for the series. The GRE data were supplemented with data from the U.S. Department of Education to enrich the descriptions of postsecondary institutions and the U.S. Census Bureau to enhance the profile of where individuals reside. The data are descriptive rather than inferential, so observed differences should not be considered definitive or conclusive.

List of Series Abbreviations

AANAPISI	Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–serving institution
AAU	American Association of Universities
ACE	American Council on Education
ADHD	attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
American Indian	American Indian or Alaskan Native
ANNH	Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian–serving institution
Asian	Asian or Asian American
B&B	Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study
BA/BS	bachelor of arts/bachelor of science
<i>Barron’s</i>	<i>Barron’s Profile of American Colleges</i>
BIQ	Background Information Questionnaire
Black	Black or African American
Carnegie	Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education
CBSA	core-based statistical area
doctorate	doctoral degree, e.g., PhD, EdD
GPA	grade point average
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
HSI	Hispanic-serving institution
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
master’s	master’s degree, e.g., MA, MS, MEd
Mexican	Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano
MSI	minority-serving institution
NASNTI	Native American–serving nontribal institution
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
no parent bach	no parent earned a bachelor’s degree
NSF	National Science Foundation
one parent bach	at least one parent earned a bachelor’s degree
one parent bach+	at least one parent earned a graduate degree
other	other race/ethnicity
other Hispanic	other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American
PBI	predominantly Black institution
PGS	prospective graduate students
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and math
TCU	tribal college or university
White	White (non-Hispanic)

Introduction

Supporting diversity and inclusion in graduate education is both an economic and a moral imperative. For a nation to prosper, drive innovation, ensure sustainability and maximize impact, its universities must draw from a broad pool of students with the ability, curiosity, and motivation to complete a graduate degree. In the United States, as in many countries, the progress we are making toward this goal is steady, but slow. In order to accelerate progress, universities, funding bodies, and policymakers must work together to develop policies and practices that help attract, retain, and support the success of all students, and especially those from populations historically underrepresented in graduate education. (Council of Graduate Schools, 2019)

Attracting a broad pool of students with the “ability, curiosity and motivation to complete a graduate degree” is arguably the most critical step of the enterprise outlined by the 500 Council of Graduate Schools graduate degree-granting university members. Focusing on attraction benefits both students and graduate programs. For instance, students must find graduate programs and their institutions attractive or they will not apply. Similarly, admissions committees need to find PGS compelling, or they will not offer admission.

Today, campus diversity has a range of dimensions. For example, Arizona State University (n.d.) describes its campus as “one big mosaic” and includes students from “various countries of origin, cultural and ethnic identities, religious beliefs, income levels, political affiliations, sexual preferences, and gender identity” (Arizona State University, n.d.).

While discussions around increasing diversity often focus on attracting a broad range of students, the unique needs and challenges of specific groups—such as Hispanic graduate school aspirants—are frequently overlooked.¹ This oversight is problematic given the growing demographic significance of Hispanics in the United States and their underrepresentation at the highest levels of academe. Hispanic graduate students represent a small but vital part of America’s future intellectual capital. In 2020, nearly 341,000 Hispanic students were enrolled in postbaccalaureate study, with women accounting for two-thirds of the students ($n = 221,896$) and men the other one-third ($n = 118,973$; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2021, Table 306.10). To truly realize the full potential of the Hispanic talent pool, we need to understand better the pathways and barriers these individuals face when aspiring to graduate education.

The goal of this study is not to examine what sets Hispanics apart from non-Hispanics but to explore the rich heterogeneity among U.S. citizens who identify as Hispanic, with a particular focus on gender and subgroup differences. By understanding these intragroup differences, students, families, educators, and policymakers can work collaboratively with the Hispanic community to cultivate greater interest in graduate education and create pathways for student participation.

Recognizing the Diversity Among Hispanic People

The Hispanic population of the United States is 62.6 million, with people of Hispanic origin representing 18.9% of the total U.S. population. These Americans trace their roots to Spain, Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Spanish-speaking nations of the Caribbean (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022b). The UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute identified 19 Latino “origin” groups—Argentinean, Bolivian, Chilean, Colombian, Costa Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Ecuadorian, Guatemalan, Honduran, Mexican, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Uruguayan, and Venezuelan (Zong, 2022). They encourage us to consider how different groups experience opportunities and gains. The report, *A Mosaic, Not a Monolith: A Profile of the U.S. Latino Population, 2000–2020* (Zong, 2022), presented the racial, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity of the Latino population. It also illustrated the distribution of the Latino population and reported that Mexicans make up more than half (59%) of the Latino population in the United States, followed by Puerto Ricans (9%), Salvadorians (4%), Cubans (4%), and Dominicans (4%). Patten (2016) described Hispanic millennials (born between 1981 and 1986) as less likely to be immigrants and more likely to speak English proficiently than older generations.

The Graduate Education Pathway

The path to graduate school is often traced back to a key moment when students first contemplated pursuing an advanced degree. However, little research has focused on PGS’ unique characteristics and aspirations, particularly through the lens of Hispanic subgroups and gender. This study seeks to fill that gap by shedding light on how race/ethnicity and gender can affect graduate school aspirations and choices. By understanding students’ diverse educational journeys and the influence of their backgrounds, key stakeholders can better craft policies and practices that create new possibilities.

In preparing for this study, a content analysis of the questions on the *GRE*[®] test registration form and the Background Information Questionnaire (BIQ) was conducted. Following this, consideration was given to how ETS's data from these questions could be presented to offer potential insights for individuals and organizations involved in graduate education, such as graduate education institutions, graduate school admissions offices, organizations focused on diversity and inclusion, policymakers and government agencies, and education researchers and analysts. It was concluded that presenting the data in response to a series of questions would be the most effective way to provide a snapshot of the period from July 2016 to June 2021. In presenting this research, it is important to emphasize, and encourage readers to remember, Emdin's (2012) wisdom that "yes, there is difference but difference is not deficient" (p. 1).

Six grand questions guided this work:

1. Who were the PGS? This section examines key demographic characteristics, such as age, if they communicate better in English than any other language, and whether they have a documented disability.
2. Where did the PGS reside? This analysis explores their geographic distribution, including their residence by U.S. Census region and the most populous states, core-based statistical areas (CBSAs), and congressional districts.
3. What were their education and work experiences? Their enrollment statuses and work experiences are presented here.
4. What were their undergraduate experiences? This section delves into the characteristics of their baccalaureate institutions, their experiences related to family educational attainment, Federal Pell Grant eligibility, and their academic achievements, such as their undergraduate fields of study and grade point averages (GPAs), both overall and within their major.
5. What were PGS' plans for graduate study? The focus here is on their aspirations for graduate education, including their intended field of study, mode of study (part-time/full-time), attendance plans, and preferred geographic region for pursuing graduate school.
6. What were their emerging graduate school choice sets? This section discusses the set of graduate schools under consideration, including factors such as geographic

location and the potential to pursue graduate studies at their baccalaureate institution or a flagship university within their state. Furthermore, the characteristics of these institutions (e.g., public/private) are analyzed, along with the intensity of particular institutional characteristics within the choice sets.

This report takes a descriptive approach, comparing women PGS from different racial and ethnic groups in relation to the six key research questions to illuminate their distinct characteristics, experiences, and pathways toward graduate education.

Methodology

To answer the six research questions about PGS, data from the ETS GRE Program were analyzed. The GRE data are unique in their focus on the period before application to graduate programs. Other well-known national data sets focus on enrollment and degree completion, such as the National Center for Education Statistics' Baccalaureate and Beyond Study; the National Student Clearinghouse education data; and the National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates, which examines doctoral degree completion. The Council of Graduate Schools' report *Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2011 to 2021* (Zhou, 2022) focused on the more than 2 million applications U.S. graduate schools received in fall 2021. It is not possible, however, to convert applications into numbers of individual applicants.

When individuals register for the GRE, in addition to providing their gender and state of residence, they complete the self-report BIQ, with questions on demographic background, undergraduate institution and experiences, and preferences for graduate study. Each year, the GRE Program publishes a snapshot report that presents analyses for all GRE test takers. The Pathways to Graduate School: A Data Series on U.S. Prospective Graduate Students reports are intended to supplement the ETS (2022) report on the snapshot of individuals who took the GRE General Test from July 2016 to June 2021.

The 1,093,466 individuals who (a) took the GRE General Test between June 30, 2016, and July 1, 2021, and consented to have their data used in research; (b) had valid scores for all three test sections (analytical writing, verbal reasoning, and quantitative reasoning); (c) self-identified as U.S. citizens; (d) had gender data; and (e) reported information about their race/ethnicity are the subjects for this study. Individuals who took the GRE multiple times were counted once, and the BIQ data from the most recent registration were included. As women are

the focus of this study, the analyses were run on the 698,298 women who had complete baseline data.

The most common reason for taking the GRE, cited by 99%, was to gain admission to graduate school, with the next most common reason being a requirement for fellowship or scholarship applications (8%). It is appropriate to refer to these women as PGS, as the majority (87%) selected only one of the seven provided response options to the question of why they were taking the GRE.

Variable Response Rates

The data in the following six sections pertain to U.S. individuals who provided both gender and Federal Pell Grant data, along with their responses to each item. Owing to differing response rates for each item, the groups of respondents may vary. Descriptive statistics were computed for each item based on all available responses, and missing values were excluded from the analysis.

The GRE registration form and the 21-item BIQ have required- and optional-response questions. The four BIQ questionnaire items that require an answer ask registrants about their country of citizenship, about their educational status at the time of the GRE exam, whether they communicate better (or as well) in English than in any other language, and about their intended field of graduate study.

Generally, item response rates for almost all the optional-response items used in the study were above 75% (see Table A1). The exception is the undergraduate institution name, with a 62% item response. Accordingly, this response rate moderates the findings on characteristics of the undergraduate institutions attended. Additionally, this low item response rate impacts the derived variables that present information on whether individuals were considering applying to their undergraduate institutions for graduate school.

Other Variable Notes

Federal Pell Grant Eligibility

Individuals responded to the question “If you are a United States citizen, were you eligible for a Pell Grant as an undergraduate?” The response options were “Yes,” “No,” and “I don’t know.” This is the only question on the BIQ to offer an “I don’t know” option. Two

rationales are provided for including an “I don’t know” option. The first is to allow people to indicate what Sudman and Bradburn (1973) referred to as memory error, which is forgetting an episode entirely. The second reason is that the U.S. financial aid system has been burdened by decades of students and families experiencing a lack of clear and transparent information about how they pay for college. For example, Burd et al. (2018), writing for New America in “Decoding the Cost of College: The Case for Transparent Financial Aid Award Letters,” reported in their analyses of 515 award letters from unique institutions that many institutions fail to differentiate types of aid—70% of award letters grouped all aid together. So, it is possible that an individual who received financial aid may not have been provided with the level of detail to know if they had a Federal Pell Grant.

Field of Study

One exception to not including missing data in the analyses was for the undergraduate and intended graduate fields of study. The undergraduate field of study was not a required response item, whereas the intended field of graduate study was. To present comparable analyses to those given in ETS (2022) and to compare continuing in the same field of study in graduate school, the missing data for the undergraduate field of study were included in the reported categories as “undecided or no major provided.” The “undecided or no major provided” response is more common for intended graduate majors than for undergraduate fields. Although no formal analysis was conducted, one possible explanation is that students are encouraged to take the GRE while still undergraduates and in “study mode,” allowing them to bank their scores for future use as they await greater clarity with regard to their graduate school plans.

Graduate Institution Choices

Individuals have two options for indicating which universities or graduate programs they want their scores sent to when they register or after they take the exam. Some individuals may not have sent their scores to institutions when the data were captured. It is reasonable to deduce that individuals sent their scores only to graduate programs in which they hoped to have an option to enroll.

Parental Education

Parents' educational attainment is classified at three levels. No parent with a bachelor's includes individuals who reported that their parents had achieved the following levels of education: less than high school diploma, high school diploma or equivalency, some postsecondary education, or an associate's degree (a first-generation college student and first-generation graduate student). One parent with a bachelor's includes individuals who reported that at least one parent earned a bachelor's degree in any field (a continuing-generation college student and a first-generation graduate student). One parent with a bachelor's+ includes individuals who reported that at least one parent earned a graduate or professional degree in any field (a continuing-generation college student and a continuing-generation graduate student).

State of Permanent Residence

Individuals provided two sources of information about where they were living. The first source, a required response on the registration form, was their address—for example, the specific location where they could receive correspondence. The second source was their state of permanent residence, an optional response on the BIQ. The response rate for the permanent residence question was lower than the response rate for the address question. The match rate of responses for the 640,629 individuals who responded to both questions was 99%, so these analyses assume that state address is comparable to state of permanent residence.

Supplementing the GRE Data

At the individual level, the residential information provided at registration was augmented by matching zip codes with data from the U.S. Census. This included CBSAs and congressional districts. Examining CBSAs rather than a single city, such as Cambridge, MA, captures a larger geographic area, such as Boston–Cambridge–Newton, MA/NH. The U.S. Census Bureau (2023) defined a CBSA as

the county or counties (or equivalent entities) associated with at least one core (urbanized area or urban cluster) of at least 10,000 population, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties.

At the institutional level, the GRE data were supplemented with data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to understand better the types of institutions PGS

attended as undergraduates and the kinds of institutions they aspire to attend for their graduate education. Institutional characteristics, such as whether the institution was under public or private control, its Carnegie classification, and the size of the student body served, were included. In addition to IPEDS, other enhancements to the institutional data included adding single-sex colleges, regional comprehensive universities, or flagship state university status. At the undergraduate level, information from *Barron's Profile of American Colleges* indexes to undergraduate institutions according to their degree of admissions selectivity was incorporated. For undergraduate and graduate institutions, membership in the American Association of Universities (AAU) and minority-serving institution status data from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education were added to the data set.

Analyses

Because the study uses a convenience sample, its results are not necessarily generalizable to all U.S. women who aspire to attend graduate or first professional school. At the same time, the sheer size of the data pool for this study enables us to provide insights into the aspirations and characteristics of many, and even most, women PGS from 2016 to 2021.

The intention of the Pathways to Graduate School: A Data Series on U.S. Prospective Graduate Students reports aligns with the qualities of quantitative descriptive analyses presented by Loeb et al. (2017), who stated,

Quantitative descriptive analysis characterizes the world or a phenomenon by identifying patterns in data to answer questions about who, what, where, when, and to what extent. Descriptive analysis is data simplification. Good description presents what we know about capacities, needs, methods, practices, policies, populations, and settings in a manner that is relevant to a specific research or policy question. (p. 1)

This exploratory study aims to identify and describe the experiences of U.S. women overall and across the nine racial groups of women. Descriptive analyses—frequencies and cross-tabulations—of self-reported data are presented. These descriptive analyses answer the six research questions about who, where, and to what extent. Please note that the group differences presented have not been statistically tested and should be interpreted cautiously. Although the group statistics presented from the PGS sample offer valuable insights, readers need to consider how these trends may reflect their own institutions' unique context and data, fostering a deeper understanding of the patterns within their specific institutions or programs.

The body of the report presents selected data in graph and table format, and the appendix provides six data tables (Tables A1–A6) aligned to the six research questions.

Limitations

All data have limitations, and the data analyzed for this study of U.S. citizens who are PGS are no exception. Following are key limitations to keep in mind when thinking about the results of this study: (a) the representativeness of the individuals whose data are presented in this report, (b) the possible difference between the emerging choice set and the final choice set, (c) the high yet variable item response rates, (d) variables that may not reflect the most current standards or classifications, and (e) the graduate school pathway factors that are beyond the scope of the data available for this study.

The primary limitation of this study is that respondents are limited to U.S. citizens who took the GRE between 2016 and 2021. It is understood that this group does not encompass the entirety of PGS. Individuals who did not or will not submit GRE scores for graduate school admission are excluded, and it is not known what portion of the national pool this represents. Nevertheless, while the required elements of a graduate school application may vary depending on degree level or institutional type, the GRE has been a key component of many graduate school admissions applications for the past 75 years.

Another limitation of this study is the possible difference between PGS' emerging and final choice sets. There could be additions and deletions. Additions could include new graduate programs that require GRE scores and those that do not. At a later time, PGS may elect not to apply to some graduate programs where they sent their GRE scores. These changes to the choice set composition could potentially alter the choice set proportions reported in the study. Additionally, it is acknowledged that individuals' plans and interests may change even if they initially apply to graduate schools.

The methodology section discussed issues regarding item response rates for the GRE registration form and the 21-item BIQ. In particular, converting the question about the current or most recent undergraduate institution from open response to forced choice could potentially change the findings on the undergraduate institutional experience.

In two instances, the variable definitions used in this study may not reflect the most current standards or classifications, as they were based on the conventions and data available at the time of analysis. The variables follow:

- **Gender.** Gender is a required response on the GRE registration form. The options at the time were binary: female and male.² Henceforth individuals who identify as female will be referred to as women.
- **Racial/Ethnic Group.** The BIQ asked respondents, “If you are a United States citizen, how do you describe yourself? (Select one),” offering nine response options: (a) American Indian or Alaskan Native (American Indian); (b) Asian or Asian American (Asian); (c) Black or African American (Black); (d) Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano (Mexican); (e) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders (Hawaiian/Pacific Islander); (f) Puerto Rican; (g) other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American (other Hispanic); (h) White (non-Hispanic) (White); or (i) other.³ It is important to note that the “other” option did not allow respondents to provide additional details. Additionally, the survey’s single-select design allowed individuals to select only one option, potentially limiting their ability to represent their racial or ethnic identity fully. Individuals who identify with multiple races or ethnicities are able to choose one or “other.” These response options may not permit individuals to represent their identity as they want, and the data may not reflect the nation’s current diversity or citizenship status.

This study is a secondary data analysis using an internal ETS data source—the GRE Program data. We leveraged the rich data set to answer our questions. Yet the GRE data, while providing great insights into PGS’ experiences, accomplishments, and plans, did not contain some of the information we would have liked to have had to enrich and contextualize the findings and add greater insight into this part of the educational journey. These include additional personal data (e.g., marital status, parenthood, and income), significant influences or supporters (e.g., undergraduate faculty, family, or friends), additional educational or work accomplishments (e.g., publications), educational debt (undergraduate and/or graduate), alternative sources of funding (e.g., employer educational assistance programs), and career aspirations.

Results

Research Question 1: Who Were the Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students?

Individuals and organizations working in the graduate school application space may consider prospective applicants in two ways. Active participants are individuals already engaged in the admissions process, preparing or submitting their applications. Graduate schools gather demographic information for this group to understand trends in who is applying and to ensure that they meet diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. Institutions can use the data to tailor support to different populations and inform strategies to retain students from diverse backgrounds throughout the application process. Prospective applicants who have not yet entered the application process but are potential candidates are targets for outreach. Graduate programs and organizations rely on demographic data to identify populations that may be underrepresented in their applicant pool, allowing them to develop outreach efforts that resonate with specific communities.

For this study, age, ability to communicate in English, and disability status are all statuses that can shape women PGS' undergraduate experiences and could factor into their considerations for their graduate school experiences (see Table A2).

General Profile

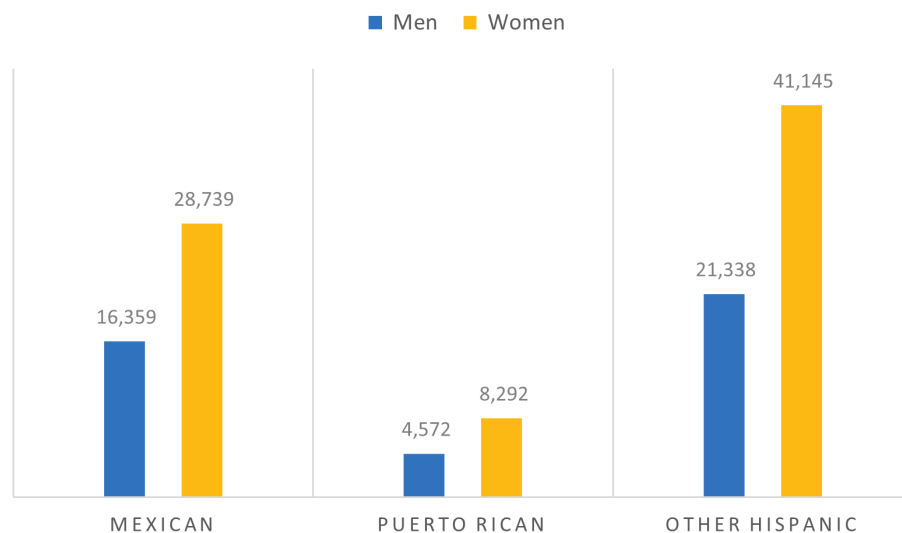
In this study, a total of 980,903 individuals were analyzed, providing a robust data set for examining the diversity within the Hispanic population with graduate school aspirations. The analyses examine three key subgroups: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic origins.

Other Hispanic individuals are the largest group of PGS ($n = 62,483$), followed by Mexican individuals ($n = 45,098$) and Puerto Rican individuals ($n = 12,684$). Women represented nearly two-thirds of PGS in each profile (see Figure 1 and Table 1).⁴

Table 1. Profile of Prospective Graduate Students by Detailed Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016 to June 2021

Race/ethnicity	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021	Total
Mexican	8,859	10,151	10,356	9,397	6,335	45,098
Women	5,583	6,402	6,620	6,015	4,119	28,739
Men	3,276	3,749	3,736	3,382	2,216	16,359
Puerto Rican	3,125	3,064	2,622	2,276	1,777	12,864
Women	2,024	1,960	1,699	1,478	1,131	8,292
Men	1,101	1,104	923	798	646	4,572
Other Hispanic	12,118	14,330	14,008	12,748	9,279	62,483
Women	7,921	9,393	9,263	8,360	6,208	41,145
Men	4,197	4,937	4,745	4,388	3,071	21,338

Note. These individuals had scores on all three GRE General Test measures over the period of July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2021, and responded to the questions about gender, citizenship, and race/ethnicity on the GRE registration form and the Background Information Questionnaire. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Figure 1. Prospective Graduate Students by Detailed Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–2021

These individuals had scores on all three GRE General Test measures over the period of July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2021, and responded to the questions about gender, citizenship, and race/ethnicity on the GRE registration form and the Background Information Questionnaire. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Age Group

In the U.S. Hispanic population, 32% of individuals are Gen Z—born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s (“Hispanics in the U.S. 2022,” n.d.). In this study, roughly 68% of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS are 25 years of age or younger, with many being under 22 years of age (Table A2). Slightly more women than men were in the 22 or younger age groups in each Hispanic subgroup. In general, the representation of PGS in each age group decreased as age increased.

Communicates Better in English

The vast majority of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS indicated that they communicated best in English (94%, 90%, and 94%, respectively), with minimal differences between Hispanic subgroups and by gender within subgroups (see Table A2). For those who indicated that they did not communicate best in English, Spanish was most often listed as their native language,⁵ with some other Hispanic PGS reporting Portuguese.

Documented Disability

The Americans With Disabilities Act defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (Civil Rights Division, n.d.). These include both visible disabilities—those disabilities that have a visible indicator, such as use of a screen reader—and invisible disabilities, or those disabilities that do not have a visible indicator, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Individuals could indicate one of the following: none, blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, physical disability, learning disability, multiple disabilities, or other. For the other disability category, the BIQ did not have the option to provide more information, for example, if they had a neurodevelopmental or cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, ADHD, or brain injury) or an emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder).

Across the three Hispanic subgroups, approximately 5% reported having a documented visible or invisible disability (see Table A2), with women and men being comparable. For those individuals who reported having a documented disability, a learning disability was the most common. There were notable differences among the Hispanic subgroups, with 33% of Mexican PGS reporting having a learning disability, compared to 38% of Puerto Rican PGS and 43% of

other Hispanic PGS. Another commonly reported disability was being blind/visually impaired. Mexican PGS reported the highest rate of being blind/visually impaired (19%), followed by Puerto Rican PGS (15%) and other Hispanic PGS (13%).

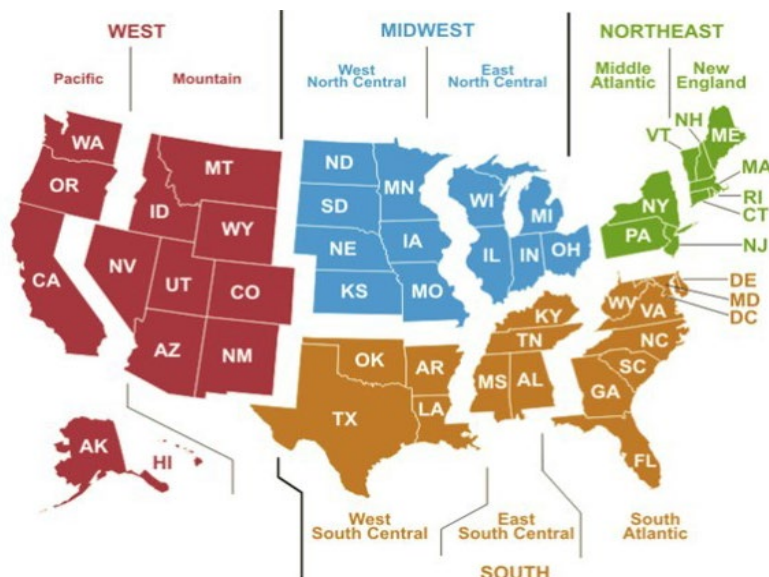
Research Question 2: Where Did Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students Reside?

If we look at an aerial view of the 3.1 million square miles composing the contiguous United States, where might we find PGS? The simple answer is, everywhere. And yet, the U.S. population is not evenly distributed across the country. Where are there significant representations of individuals seeking advanced education? Examining geographic data can inform both admissions and advocacy work.

Gevelber (2014) wrote, “Think geographic, not just demographic. . . . Location data provides a reliable window into the mindsets, intentions, and concerns of an audience—sometimes even more so than demographic data.” Graduate schools interested in shaping their applicant pools may benefit from a better understanding of where PGS reside. Equipped with this intelligence, graduate schools may refine their strategies to target future graduate students, perhaps in their undergraduate years or even through workforce connections. Insights gained from geographic data may also help with market segmentation when recruiting.

Among the many ways to champion change in graduate education is to advocate for resources and policies that can ease students’ journeys. The U.S. president is the only elected official with every prospective graduate student in their constituency. It is imperative that elected officials at all levels—local, county, state, and federal—know who is in their districts and what they need. U.S. Census data can help determine the federal funding state governments and local communities receive; the need for new higher education institutions and programs; and representation in state legislatures and the U.S. House of Representatives, where critical graduate education issues can be voted on.

The data presented in this section include home state, CBSAs, the four census regions and nine divisions (see Figure 2),⁶ and congressional districts. Except for the census data, the other data presented are limited to the 10 most populated areas.⁷

Figure 2. U.S. Census Regions and Divisions. Data are From the U.S. Census Bureau

Home States

To set a context for where the Hispanic PGS in this study resided, three geographic portraits of the U.S. population are examined: (a) a national portrait of where the U.S. population resides, (b) states with 1 million or more Hispanic residents, and (c) a more detailed analysis of the states where selected Hispanic subgroups resided.

In 2022, the most populous states in the nation were California, Texas, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Georgia, North Carolina, and Michigan (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022a). In 2021, the states with 1 million or more Hispanic residents were Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022b). A third picture spotlights where specific Hispanic subgroups live. Zong (2022) reported that in 2020, Mexican individuals were the most prominent Latino population group in 40 states, followed by Puerto Rican individuals in seven states (Connecticut, Hawai‘i, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania), Salvadoran individuals in Maryland and the District of Columbia, Cuban individuals in Florida, and Dominican individuals in Rhode Island.

The majority of PGS of each Hispanic subgroup live in 10 states, ranging from 84% of Mexican PGS to 78% of Puerto Rican PGS and 79% of other Hispanic PGS (see Table 2). Three observations about residency are made.

Table 2. The 10 States With the Highest Representation of Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican			Puerto Rican			Other Hispanic		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Highest representation (highest to lowest)									
1	California	California	California	New York	New York	New York	Florida	Florida	Florida
2	Texas	Texas	Texas	Florida	Florida	Florida	Texas	Texas	Texas
3	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois	New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey	California	California	California
4	Arizona	Arizona	Arizona	Texas	Texas	Texas	New York	New York	New York
5	New York	New York	New York	California	California	California	New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey
6	Florida	Florida	Florida	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	New Mexico	New Mexico	New Mexico
7	Washington	Washington	Washington	Massachusetts	Illinois	Massachusetts	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia
8	New Mexico	Colorado	Colorado	Virginia	North Carolina	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois
9	Colorado	Georgia	New Mexico	Georgia	Massachusetts	Georgia	Massachusetts	Massachusetts	Massachusetts
10	Georgia	New Mexico	Georgia	Illinois	Georgia	North Carolina	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia
Percentage	83	85	84	77	79	78	77	80	79
Top 10 <i>n</i>	13,545	24,332	37,877	2,846	5,618	8,440	16,222	32,821	49,043
50 states + DC	16,272	28,632	44,904	3,717	7,113	10,830	21,135	40,902	62,037

Note. These analyses are restricted to the 50 states and Washington, DC. The shading signifies the frequency with which a state is shared across the three Hispanic groups. Dark blue denotes that the state is common to all three Hispanic subgroups. Pink represents a state that is common to two Hispanic subgroups. Orange denotes a state that is unique to one Hispanic subgroup. Gray indicates that a state is unique to that particular gender within the Hispanic subgroup. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

First, each of the three subgroups is located in states with high concentrations of Hispanics nationwide before disaggregating by gender. Notably, all three PGS groups overlap in six states—California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New York, and Texas—although the order of their representation varies among the groups.

Second, each subgroup has at least one unique state where they are present in significant numbers. Mexican PGS are the only group reporting high numbers in Arizona, Washington, and Colorado. Puerto Rican PGS demonstrate greater presence in Pennsylvania and North Carolina, while Virginia is exclusively noted for other Hispanic PGS. Additionally, some states overlap for two of the three subpopulations, such as New Jersey and Massachusetts for Puerto Rican and other Hispanic PGS and New Mexico for both Mexican and other Hispanic PGS.

Third, when gender within the subgroups is examined, two observations emerge. First, Mexican men and women and other Hispanic men and women share the same 10 states. Second, Puerto Rican men and women share nine states in common, with men living in Virginia and women living in North Carolina.

If Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, had been included in these analyses, the data for Puerto Rican PGS would have been different. Puerto Rico would have had the third highest number of Puerto Rican PGS. Regarding gender within the Puerto Rican PGS, Puerto Rico would have been first for men and third for women. Puerto Rico would not have been included in the 10 states with the highest numbers of Mexican PGS and other Hispanic PGS overall or by gender within the subgroup.

Core-Based Statistical Areas

The 10 largest CBSAs in the United States in 2022 were (a) New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY/NJ/PA; (b) Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim, CA; (c) Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, IL/IN/WI; (d) Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX; (e) Houston–Pasadena–The Woodlands, TX; (f) Washington–Arlington–Alexandria, DC/VA/MD/WV; (g) Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington, PA/NJ/DE/MD; (h) Atlanta–Sandy Springs–Alpharetta, GA; (i) Miami–Fort Lauderdale–Pompano Beach, FL; and (j) Phoenix–Mesa–Chandler, AZ.

In its 2014 analyses of the metropolitan areas with the largest Hispanic populations, the Pew Research Center (2016) ranked the top 10 areas as Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim, CA; New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY/NJ/PA; Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach, FL; Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land, TX; Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario, CA;

Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, IL/IN/WI; Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX; Phoenix–Mesa–Chandler, AZ; San Antonio–New Braunfels, TX; and San Diego–Carlsbad, CA. Six of these metropolitan areas overlapped with the 10 largest CBSAs.

The 10 CBSAs with the highest representation of the three Hispanic PGS included many of the largest urban areas with significant Hispanic populations (see Table 3). These areas accounted for half of all Hispanic PGS.

Here are three observations about the CBSAs. First, all three Hispanic PGS groups had two CBSAs in common: Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, IL/IN/WI, and Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX. Second, Mexican and Puerto Rican PGS had no CBSAs that were uniquely shared between them. However, other Hispanic PGS overlapped with Mexican PGS in four CBSAs and with Puerto Rican PGS in a different four. Third, Mexican PGS and Puerto Rican PGS were also found in CBSAs that were unique to their group—El Paso, TX, for Mexican PGS and Boston–Cambridge–Newton, MA/NH, for Puerto Rican PGS. In addition, men and women from each Hispanic subgroup were represented in high numbers in nine out of 10 of the same CBSAs.

If CBSAs from U.S. territories had been included, the San Juan–Bayamón–Caguas, PR, CBSA would have had the second highest number of Puerto Rican PGS overall and of Puerto Rican men and women. This would have displaced the Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX, CBSA for the group overall or for men, and the San Antonio area would have been removed from the top 10 for women.

Mexican and other Hispanic PGS had Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim, CA; Houston–Pasadena–The Woodlands, TX; San Antonio–New Braunfels, TX; and San Francisco–Oakland–Fremont, CA.

Puerto Rican PGS and other Hispanic PGS shared four CBSAs: (a) New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY/NJ; (b) Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach, FL; (c) Washington–Arlington–Alexandria, DC/VA/MD/WV; and (d) Orlando–Kissimmee–Sanford, FL.

Both Mexican and Puerto Rican PGS resided in large numbers in CBSAs that were unique to them—El Paso, TX, for Mexican PGS and Boston–Cambridge–Newton, MA/NH, for Puerto Rican PGS.

Table 3. The 10 Core-Based Statistical Areas With the Highest Representation of Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican			Puerto Rican			Other Hispanic		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Highest representation (highest to lowest)									
1	LA Area	LA Area	LA Area	NYC Area	NYC Area	NYC Area	NYC Area	NYC Area	NYC Area
2	SD Area	SD Area	SD Area	ORD Area	ORD Area	ORD Area	MIA Area	MIA Area	MIA Area
3	SB Area	SB Area	SB Area	MIA Area	MIA Area	MIA Area	LA Area	LA Area	LA Area
4	CHI Area	CHI Area	CHI Area	TPA Area	TPA Area	TPA Area	DC Area	HOU Area	HOU Area
5	DAL Area	DAL Area	DAL Area	DC Area	CHI Area	CHI Area	HOU Area	DC Area	DC Area
6	HOU Area	HOU Area	HOU Area	CHI Area	PHL Area	PHL Area	SA Area	SA Area	SA Area
7	SA Area	SA Area	SA Area	PHL Area	DC Area	DC Area	DAL Area	DAL Area	DAL Area
8	El Paso, TX	SF Area	El Paso, TX	BOS Area	BOS Area	BOS Area	ORD Area	ORD Area	ORD Area
9	MCA Area	El Paso, TX	SF Area	ATL Area	ATL Area	ATL Area	CHI Area	CHI Area	CHI Area
10	AUS Area	AUS Area	AUS Area	SA Area	DAL Area	DAL Area	BOS Area	SF Area	SF Area
Percentage	49	51	50	51	57	55	49	53	52
Top 10 <i>n</i>	8,024	14,484	22,496	1,901	4,052	5,943	10,406	21,664	32,067
50 states + DC	16,272	28,632	44,904	3,717	7,113	10,830	21,135	40,902	62,037

Note. These analyses are restricted to the 50 states and Washington, DC. The shading signifies the frequency with which a core-based statistical area is shared across the three Hispanic groups. Dark blue denotes that the core-based statistical area is common to all three Hispanic subgroups. Pink represents a core-based statistical area that is common to two Hispanic subgroups. Orange denotes a core-based statistical area that is unique to one Hispanic subgroup. Gray indicates that a core-based statistical area is unique to that particular gender within the Hispanic subgroup. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American. ATL Area = Atlanta–Sandy Springs–Roswell, GA. BAL Area = Baltimore–Columbia–Towson, MD. BOS Area = Boston–Cambridge–Newton, MA/NH. CHI Area = Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, IL/IN. DAL Area = Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX. DC Area = Washington–Arlington–Alexandria, DC/VA/MD/WV. ELP Area = El Paso–Las Cruces, TX. HOU Area = Houston–Pasadena–The Woodlands, TX. LA Area = Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim, CA. MCA Area = McAllen–Edinburg–Mission, TX. MIA Area = Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach, FL. NYC Area = New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY/NJ. ORL Area = Orlando–Kissimmee–Sanford, FL. PHL Area = Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington, PA/NJ/DE/MD. SA Area = San Antonio–New Braunfels, TX. SB Area = Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario, CA. SD Area = San Diego–Chula Vista–Carlsbad, CA. SFO Area = San Francisco–Oakland–Fremont, CA. TPA Area = Tampa–St. Petersburg–Clearwater, FL.

U.S. Census Regions and Divisions

The South is the most populous region in the United States, with 38.9% of the nation's population, followed by the West (23.6%), the Midwest (20.6%), and the Northeast (17%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). This demographic landscape is crucial for understanding the distribution of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS across the United States.

There are striking differences in the census regions where Hispanic subgroups live (see Table A3). The West is by far the most popular for Mexican PGS, with more than half residing there, compared to just 8% of Puerto Rican PGS and 24% of other Hispanic PGS. In contrast, Puerto Rican PGS are much more concentrated in the Northeast (42%), with a more than 20 percentage point difference compared to Mexican and other Hispanic PGS (4% and 22%, respectively). While the West is a popular region for all three groups, nearly half of the other Hispanic PGS reside there, considerably more than the 34% of Mexican or 41% of Puerto Rican PGS. Overall, the Midwest is not popular for any of the three groups.

At the census division level, differences in residential patterns continue to be evident. The majority of Mexican PGS live in the Pacific (43%) and West South Central (27%) divisions. In contrast, Puerto Rican PGS, particularly compared to Mexican PGS, reside at much higher rates in the Middle Atlantic and South Atlantic divisions. Other Hispanic PGS were more evenly distributed across divisions—South Atlantic (28%), Middle Atlantic (19%), West South Central (18%), and Pacific (17%).

At the census division and region levels, gender differences within each Hispanic subgroup were minimal.

U.S. Congressional Districts

There are notable differences in congressional district representation across and within the three Hispanic subgroups (see Table 4). The 10 congressional districts with the highest representation are where 17% of Mexican PGS, 19% of Puerto Rican PGS, and 17% of other Hispanic PGS reside.

Table 4. The 10 Congressional Districts With the Highest Representation of Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican			Puerto Rican			Other Hispanic		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Highest representation (highest to lowest)									
1	TX Dist. 16	TX Dist. 16	TX Dist. 16	FL Dist. 10	NY Dist. 14	NY Dist. 14	FL Dist. 27	FL Dist. 27	FL Dist. 27
2	TX Dist. 15	TX Dist. 15	TX Dist. 15	NY Dist. 14	NY Dist. 11	FL Dist. 10	FL Dist. 28	FL Dist. 28	FL Dist. 28
3	CA Dist. 52	CA Dist. 52	CA Dist. 52	NY Dist. 13	FL Dist. 09	NY Dist. 11	FL Dist. 26	NY Dist. 13	FL Dist. 25
4	TX Dist. 34	TX Dist. 34	TX Dist. 34	FL Dist. 09	FL Dist. 10	FL Dist. 09	FL Dist. 25	FL Dist. 25	FL Dist. 26
5	TX Dist. 23	CA Dist. 38	TX Dist. 23	NY Dist. 15	NY Dist. 15	NY Dist. 15	NM Dist. 01	FL Dist. 26	NY Dist. 13
6	CA Dist. 38	TX Dist. 23	CA Dist. 38	FL Dist. 03	NY Dist. 07	NY Dist. 13	TX Dist. 15	TX Dist. 15	TX Dist. 15
7	TX Dist. 28	TX Dist. 28	TX Dist. 28	NY Dist. 18	NY Dist. 17	NY Dist. 07	NY Dist. 13	TX Dist. 34	TX Dist. 34
8	CA Dist. 31	CA Dist. 31	CA Dist. 31	NY Dist. 10	NY Dist. 13	NY Dist. 17	TX Dist. 34	NY Dist. 14	NM Dist. 01
9	TX Dist. 20	CA Dist. 51	TX Dist. 20	NY Dist. 11	NY Dist. 08	NY Dist. 18	FL Dist. 03	TX Dist. 23	TX Dist. 23
10	CA Dist. 44	CA Dist. 21	CA Dist. 44	FL Dist. 07	NY Dist. 10	NY Dist. 10	TX Dist. 23	NY Dist. 15	NY Dist. 14
Percentage	18	17	17	16	20	19	16	18	17
Top 10 <i>n</i>	2,953	4,910	7,845	603	1,446	2,034	3,453	7,218	10,585
50 states + DC	16,272	28,632	44,904	3,717	7,113	10,830	21,135	40,902	62,037

Note. These analyses are restricted to the 50 states and Washington, DC. Pink shading indicates that a congressional district is one of the congressional districts with the highest representation of prospective graduate students for two groups, and orange indicates that the congressional district has the highest representation for one group. Gray shading indicates that a congressional district is unique to one gender within a group. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

The data reveal three key points. First, none of the three Hispanic subgroups share a district in common. Mexican PGS and Puerto Rican PGS do not have any congressional districts in common. However, other Hispanic PGS overlap with Mexican PGS in three districts and with Puerto Rican PGS in two districts. Second, even when the three subgroups live in the same state, there is limited overlap in the 10 congressional districts with the highest representation. Third, owing to this limited overlap, these three Hispanic subgroups collectively reside in 25 districts spanning five states (CA, FL, NM, NY, and TX).

When the three Hispanic subgroups are disaggregated by gender, the total number of states with the highest congressional district representation remains five. However, the total number of congressional districts increases from 25 to 29, with Mexican and Puerto Rican PGS each gaining representation in two additional districts.

Research Question 3: What Were Their Education and Work Experiences?

Graduate programs are interested in knowing what prospective students are engaged in at the time of application. PGS bring a diverse range of educational and work backgrounds. This section elucidates two areas that graduate programs typically consider: the applicants' current educational status and work experience. Both experiences play a critical role in shaping PGS' readiness for graduate education (see Table A4).

Current Educational Level

For each Hispanic subgroup, most individuals were currently enrolled in college—36% of Mexican PGS, 38% of Puerto Rican PGS, and 34% of other Hispanic PGS (see Table A4). There were moderate differences in being unenrolled college graduates between Puerto Rican PGS (35%) and the other two groups—42% each of Mexican and other Hispanic PGS. These patterns did not differ between genders in any of the Hispanic subgroups.

Full-Time Work Experience

Individuals decide for themselves whether to enroll in graduate school directly from undergraduate studies or to take a break. Those who take time off between undergraduate studies and graduate school may gain work experience and prepare for graduate school. Across the three Hispanic subgroups, at least half of PGS reported less than 1 year of work experience upon completing their undergraduate degrees (see Table A4). Roughly 25% reported having 1–2 years

of work experience, with another 10% having 3–4 years. When the years are aggregated, approximately 85% of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS have 4 years or fewer of work experience, which holds within subgroups by gender.

Research Question 4: What Were Their Undergraduate Experiences?

Diverse undergraduate experiences shape the academic journeys of PGS. Understanding these pathways begins by examining the institutions they attended, providing essential context for their postsecondary education. This section also explores their status as first-generation college students and their eligibility for Pell Grants, offering insight into the socioeconomic and familial factors influencing their academic decisions. Additionally, the majors they pursued and their academic performance paint a fuller picture of their readiness for advanced study. Together, these factors provide a comprehensive view of the diverse academic profiles of the three Hispanic subgroups of PGS, offering valuable information for graduate admissions committees and organizations interested in fostering equitable access to graduate education (see Table A5).

What Are the Profiles of Their Baccalaureate Institutions?

There are approximately 2,600 4-year, degree-granting, postsecondary institutions in the United States (NCES, 2021, Table 317.10). Like the women profiled in this report, higher education institutions have multiple identities—academic, athletic, and research. Several baccalaureate institution profiles are of interest. Women PGS self-reported their undergraduate institutions when they registered for the GRE. The first profile examines if women attended an undergraduate institution in their state of residence and particular types of institutions in their state of residence. The next set are two conventional institutional characteristics: control and size. The third set considers whether women attended a minority-serving institution (MSI) or a single-sex college. The final set focuses on the range of institutional diversity using the Carnegie classification, *Barron's* selectivity measures, and membership in the AAU.

Baccalaureate Institutions in Their Home States

An individual may elect to earn a bachelor's degree at a higher education institution in the state where they reside for several reasons, such as privileges tied to admissions (e.g., Texas Top 10% Plan), being eligible for in-state tuition, proximity to home, and academic offerings. Within a state, there is variation among public higher education institutions, from the state

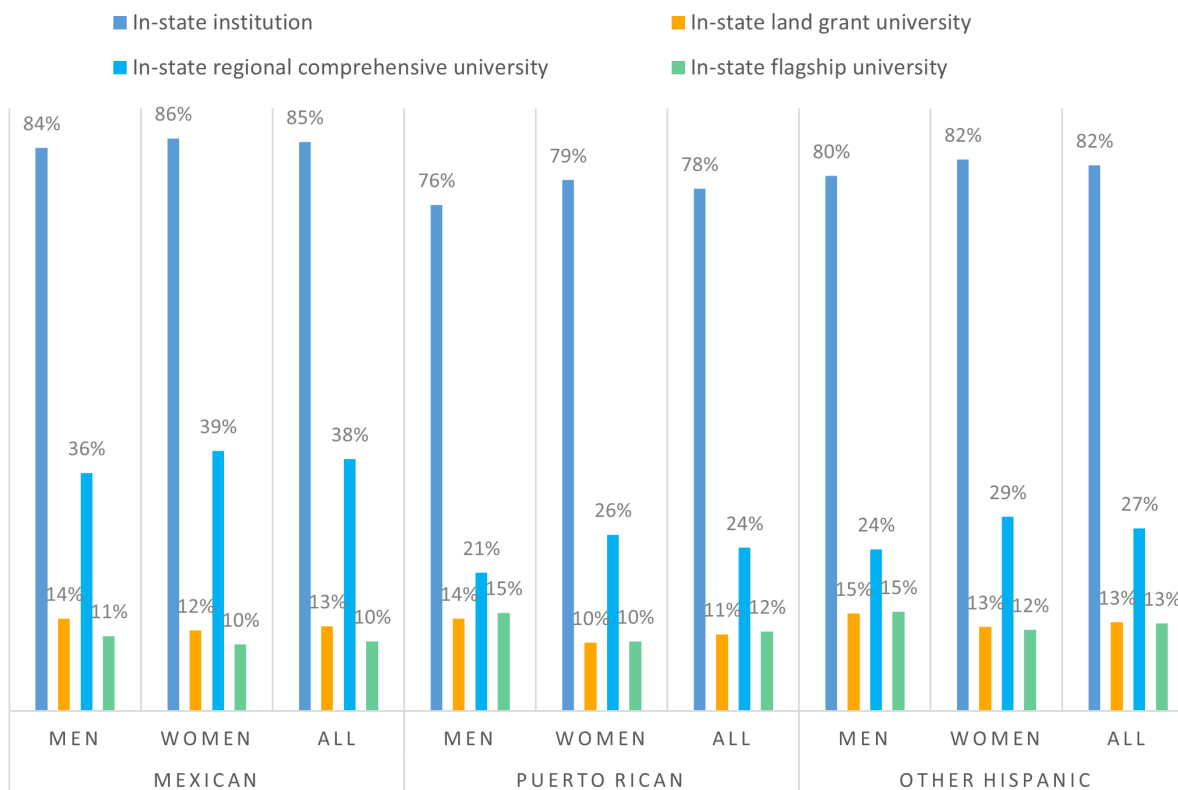
flagship to regional comprehensive universities usually founded as teacher's colleges, night schools, veteran's education centers, or technical colleges (Orphan, 2018) to state land grant universities created by the Morrill Act of 1862 with an "original mission . . . to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education" (Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, n.d., "What Is a Land-Grant University," para. 2). In some states, colleges and universities hold multiple designations, such as in New Jersey, where Rutgers–New Brunswick is the state's land grant and its public flagship university, and Montclair State University is one of the public regional comprehensive universities. By contrast, in North Carolina, North Carolina State University, Raleigh is the land grant college, North Carolina Central University is the public regional comprehensive university, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC Chapel Hill) is the public flagship.

Four different profiles of the baccalaureate experience, categorized by state of residence, are presented: attending an in-state institution within their state of residence, a state land grant university within their state of residence, a regional comprehensive university within their state of residence, or a flagship university within their state of residence (see Figure 3 and Table A5). State land grant universities, regional comprehensive universities, and flagship universities are subsets of the broader category of in-state institutions.

Across the three groups, more than two-thirds of PGS attended a public or private baccalaureate institution in their states of residence.⁸ Mexican PGS had the highest rate of attending an in-state institution (85%), followed by other Hispanic PGS (82%) and Puerto Rican PGS (78%). Hispanic subgroup enrollment at the state land grant institutions in their states of residence differed slightly between the three groups (13%, 11%, and 13%, respectively).

The three Hispanic subgroups differed considerably in their enrollment at a regional comprehensive university in their states of residence (see Figure 3 and Table A5). Mexican PGS enrolled at a relatively higher rate (38%) compared to Puerto Rican PGS (24%) and other Hispanic PGS (37%). Earning a baccalaureate degree at the flagship university in their states of residence was reasonably comparable across the three groups (10%, 12%, and 13%, respectively; see Figure 3 and Table A5). Within each Hispanic subgroup, men and women were comparable in attendance at in-state institutions, state land grant universities, regional comprehensive universities, and flagship universities.

Figure 3. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Attendance at an Undergraduate Institution in Their State of Residence and by Institutional Type and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



Apart from the University of Idaho, the University of North Dakota, and the University of South Dakota, there is no overlap between the state flagship university and the regional comprehensive universities in a state. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Institution Control and Student Body Size

Institution control is a classification for whether an institution operates either as part of a state government (public) or independently of the state government (private). Private institutions can be either nonprofit or for-profit. In fall 2021, 77% of undergraduate students nationally enrolled at public institutions, 18% at nonprofit private institutions, and 5% at for-profit institutions (NCES, 2022, Table 306.50). Control is associated with student body size. Eighty-four percent of the institutions that compose the 120 largest degree-granting colleges and universities are public universities, followed by private nonprofit (9%) and private for-profit (7%; NCES, 2021, Table 312.10).

Most Hispanic PGS attended public baccalaureate institutions, but attendance differed moderately among the Hispanic subgroups, with 70% of Puerto Rican PGS attending one, compared to 75% of Puerto Rican PGS and 79% of Mexican PGS (see Table A5). In contrast, Puerto Rican PGS had higher attendance at a private institution (30%), followed by other Hispanic PGS (25%) and Mexican PGS (21%). There were no noteworthy gender differences within groups when enrolling in public or private institutions.

Mexican and other Hispanic PGS had similar enrollment rates at universities with large student enrollments. Mexican and other Hispanic PGS attended institutions with 20,000 or more students at a higher rate (63% and 60%, respectively), while their Puerto Rican peers enrolled at substantially lower rates (43%). One possible reason for lower enrollment of Puerto Rican PGS at universities with large student enrollment is that several institutions in Puerto Rico—for example, the University of Puerto Rico–Rio Piedras, the University of Puerto Rico–Mayaguez, and Universidad Ana G. Mendez–Gurabo Campus—are institutions with 10,000–19,999 students.

Men favored institutions with 20,000 or more students more than women for each of the three Hispanic subgroups.

Minority-Serving Institutions

Today, millions of students of color, many of whom may be from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and the first in their families to attend college, enroll at an MSI (American Council on Education [ACE], n.d.-b). Students of all races/ethnicities attend MSIs. The 771 MSIs compose a category of educational establishments based on historical origin or enrollment criteria (typically the percentage of enrolled minorities at a particular school; Conrad & Gasman, 2017). Institutions may have more than one MSI designation. For this research, the umbrella term MSI subsumes Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions (AANAPISIs), Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions (AANHs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Native American-serving nontribal institutions (NASNTIs), predominantly Black institutions, and tribal colleges and universities.

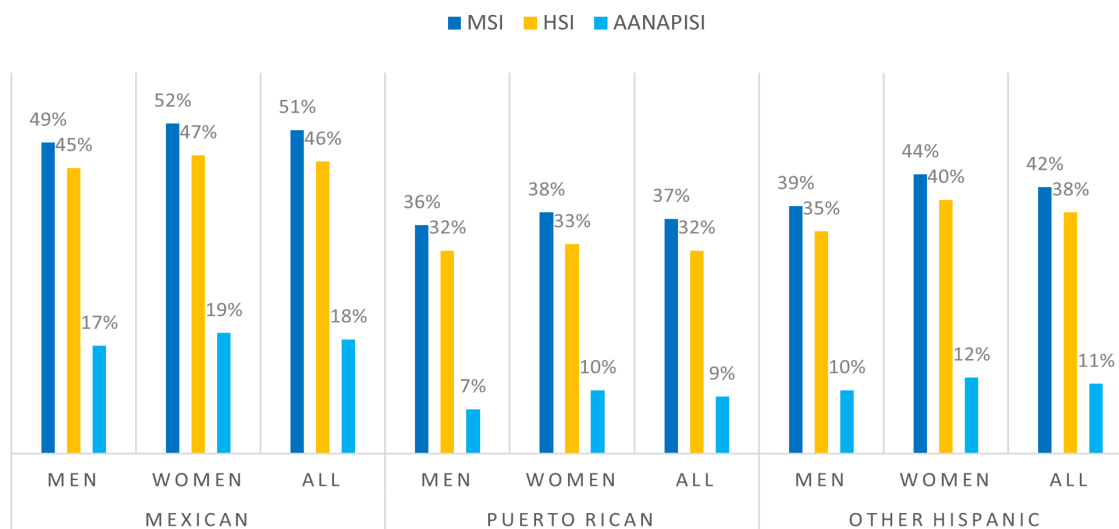
The contribution of HSIs to preparing future graduate students will most likely expand in the coming years. The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU; n.d.) reported that “while HSIs represent 16% of all higher education institutions, they serve 65% of all

Hispanic students.” HACU noted that the Higher Education Opportunity Act, Title IV (2008) defined by law an HSI designation as

tied to being an accredited, degree-granting, public or private nonprofit institution of higher education with 25% or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment, which also have an enrollment of low-income students and low average educational and gender expenditures per FTE students compared to similar institutions.

In 2020–2021, there were 516 HSIs as designated by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education, and 319 were 4-year institutions (NCES, 2022, Table 312.40).

Figure 4. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Attendance at Minority-Serving Institutions Overall, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



Minority-serving institution is the overarching term for the various types of institutions. Some institutions have multiple affiliations. Hispanic-serving institutions and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–serving institutions are two types of minority-serving institution. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American. AANAPISI = Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–serving institution. HSI = Hispanic-serving institution. MSI = minority-serving institution.

There were differences among the Hispanic subgroups in enrollment at an MSI for their baccalaureate degrees (see Figure 4 and Table A5). Puerto Rican PGS (37%) had the lowest rate of attending an MSI, compared to 42% of other Hispanic PGS and 51% of Mexican PGS. Among the different types of MSI, attending an HSI was most popular for each Hispanic subgroup. However, HSI attendance varied, with 32% of Puerto Rican PGS attending, compared to 38% of other Hispanic PGS and 46% of Mexican PGS. AANAPISIs were the second most attended MSI for Hispanic PGS, with 18% of Mexican PGS, 11% of other Hispanic PGS, and 9% of Puerto Rican PGS enrolling in an AANAPISI.

Within each Hispanic subgroup, men and women attended MSIs and particular types of MSIs at comparable rates.

Single-Sex Colleges

Today, as listed by the National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator, there are 36 single-sex women's colleges and 62 single-sex men's colleges. However, most of each Hispanic subgroup did not attend a single-gender college—1% of Mexican PGS and fewer than 1% of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic PGS (see Table 5).

Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education highlights important similarities and differences among institutions focusing on mission and function. This classification shows the range of institutional diversity in the U.S. higher education system. The basic classification is doctoral universities, master's colleges and universities, baccalaureate colleges, baccalaureate/associate colleges, associate colleges, special focus institutions, and tribal colleges (ACE, n.d.-a).

Most Hispanic PGS attended a Carnegie-classified doctoral institution for their undergraduate education (see Table A5). There was an 8 percentage point difference in their attendance, ranging from 65% of Puerto Rican PGS to 68% of Mexican PGS to 73% of other Hispanic PGS. At Carnegie-classified master's institutions, a different attendance pattern occurred, with 28% of Puerto Rican PGS, 27% of Mexican PGS, and 22% of other Hispanic PGS enrolled. The three groups had similar enrollment at Carnegie-classified baccalaureate colleges. For each of the three types of institutions, there were minimal gender differences with the Hispanic subgroups.

Barron's Profile of American Colleges

Barron's Profile of American Colleges indexes colleges according to their degree of undergraduate admissions selectivity (Barron's College Division Staff [BCDS], 2015). It considers the median entrance examination scores for the first-year class, class rank, GPA required for admission, and the percentage of accepted applicants (BCDS, 2015). The approximately 200 institutions ranked most competitive and highly competitive typically enroll students ranked in the top 35% of their high school class with a B or higher high school GPA. For example, *Barron's*-ranked institutions in Connecticut would be Charter Oak College (other), the University of Hartford (competitive), Fairfield University (very competitive), Trinity College (highly competitive), and Yale University (most competitive).

The three Hispanic subgroups have moderately different enrollment rates at *Barron's*-classified other, competitive, and very competitive institutions but somewhat similar enrollment at highly competitive and most competitive institutions (see Table A5).

Nearly one-third of PGS in each Hispanic subgroup attended a competitive-ranked institution as an undergraduate. There was an 8 percentage point difference from 37% of Mexican PGS to 30% of Puerto Rican and 29% of other Hispanic PGS attending one. At very competitive-ranked institutions, Puerto Rican and other Hispanic PGS had similar enrollment rates (34% and 31%, respectively), compared to 24% of Mexican PGS.

For each Hispanic subgroup, men and women attended all levels of *Barron's*-ranked institutions at similar levels.

Association of American Universities Member University

The 63 U.S. member universities of the AAU are “on the leading edge of innovation, scholarship, and solutions that contribute to scientific progress, economic development, security and well-being” (American Association of Universities [AAU], n.d.-b, para. 1).⁹ In 2020, AAU institutions awarded 48% of all research doctoral degrees and 20% of all undergraduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and social sciences (AAU, n.d.-a). The AAU universities conduct critical research and receive 63% of the funding from federal agencies to perform research in the national interest (AAU, n.d.-a).

Mexican PGS had the highest undergraduate attendance rate at an AAU member institution (26%), followed by 24% of other Hispanic PGS and 19% of Puerto Rican PGS (see Table A5). For each Hispanic subgroup, men and women had slight differences in attendance.

How Did Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students Experience Their Undergraduate Education?

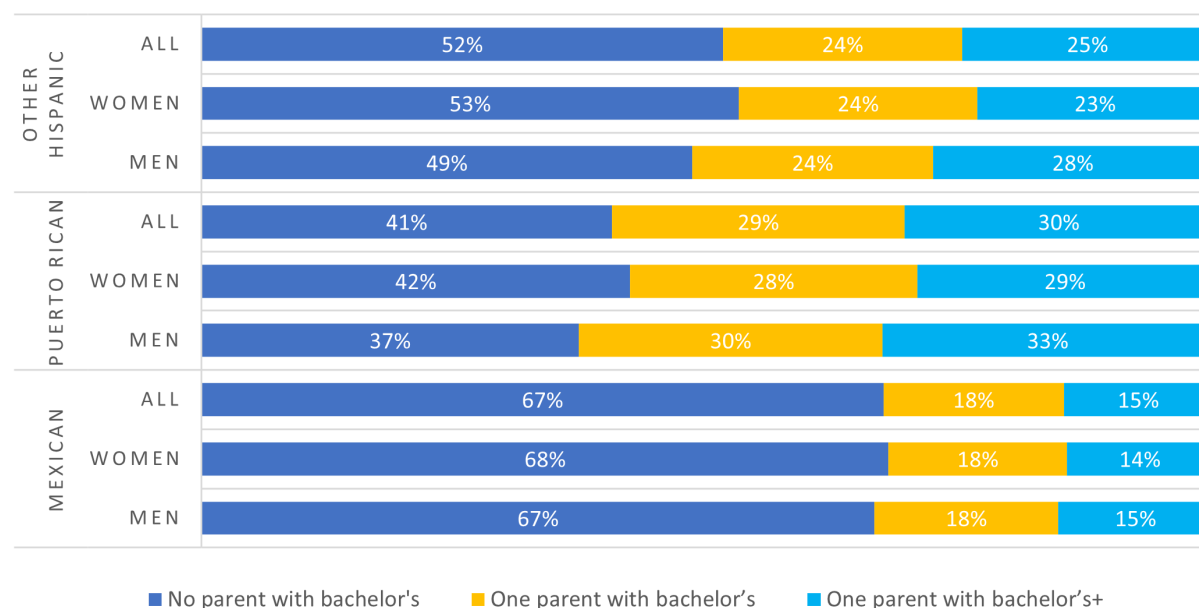
In addition to their gender and race/ethnicity, other dimensions of Hispanic individuals' lived experiences may influence how they navigate their undergraduate and graduate school experiences. We consider parental educational attainment and Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

Parent Educational Attainment

Parent/guardian (parent) educational attainment is correlated with children's educational attainment. For example, of U.S. citizens who received a doctorate in 2021, 51% had at least one parent who earned a master's degree, professional doctorate, or research doctoral degree; 23% had at least one parent with a bachelor's degree; and 26% had a parent whose highest level of education was some college or less. (National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2021, Table 5-5). For Hispanic U.S. citizens, the pattern was different: 37% had at least one parent who earned a master's degree, professional doctorate, or research doctoral degree; 22% had at least one parent with a bachelor's degree; and 41% had a parent whose highest level of education was some college or less. For a more comprehensive analysis of parental education, see the third Pathways to Graduate School series report (Millett, 2025b).

The three Hispanic subgroups differed considerably in parental education profiles (see Figure 5 and Table A5). Mexican PGS stand out for having the highest proportion of students from families with no parent bachelor's degree (BA; 67%), followed by one parent BA (18%) and one parent BA+ (15%). In contrast, other Hispanic PGS have a somewhat different family parental education profile; 52% came from families with no parent BA, 24% from families with one parent BA, and 25% from families with one parent BA+. The Puerto Rican PGS show a more balanced distribution of parental education: 41% had no parent BA, 29% had one parent BA, and 30% had one parent BA+. Interestingly, these differences do not appear to be influenced by gender, as men and women from all three groups have similar parental education backgrounds.

Figure 5. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Parental Educational Attainment and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



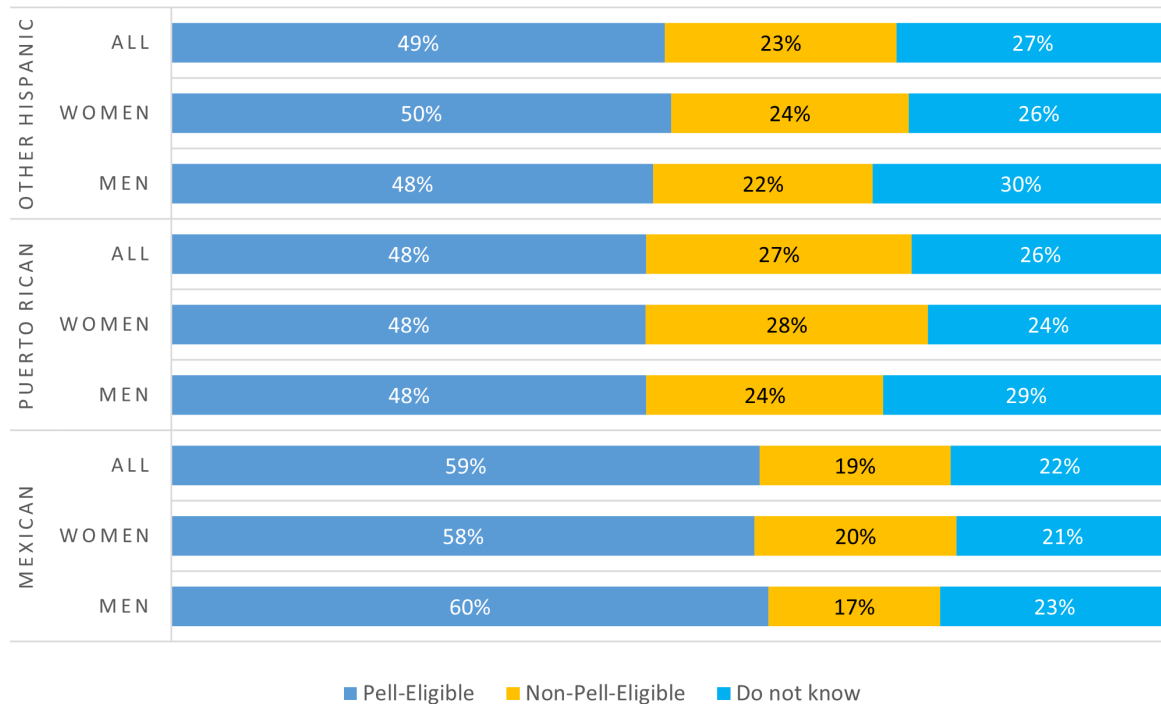
Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Federal Pell Grant Eligibility

PGS were not asked to provide information about their income, parents' income, or other financial assets. Instead, they were asked whether they participated in the Federal Pell Grant program as undergraduates, a proxy measure for economically disadvantaged status. The fourth Pathways to Graduate School series report (Millett, 2025c) provides a detailed discussion of Pell-eligible and non-Pell-eligible experiences.

While Puerto Rican and other Hispanic PGS narrowly miss the majority threshold, with percentages hovering just below 50%, it is important to highlight that nearly 50% of each group is Pell-eligible. However, Pell eligibility status varied considerably among Hispanic subgroups. For instance, 59% of Mexican PGS reported being Pell-eligible, compared to 48% of Puerto Rican PGS and 49% of other Hispanic PGS (see Figure 6 and Table A5). Gender differences were marginal within each Hispanic group.

Figure 6. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Federal Pell Grant Eligibility and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

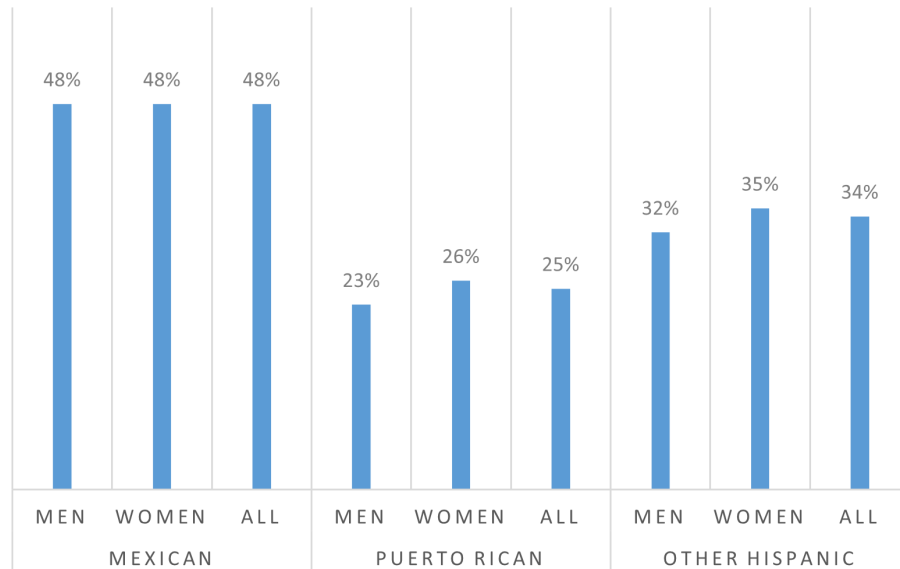


Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Pell Grant–Eligible and First-Generation College Students

Being a first-generation college student (no parent BA) can also be associated with being a student from an economically disadvantaged background. There were noteworthy differences among the three groups (see Figure 7 and Table A5). Nearly half of Mexican PGS had this experience, compared to one-quarter of Puerto Rican PGS and one-third of other Hispanic PGS (48% vs. 25% vs. 34%, respectively). Men and women had similar experiences for each of the Hispanic subgroups.

Figure 7. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students who are Pell Grant–Eligible and First-Generation College Students by Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

What Were Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students' Academic Accomplishments?

Hispanic PGS reported on two of their undergraduate academic accomplishments: what they studied and the grades they achieved.

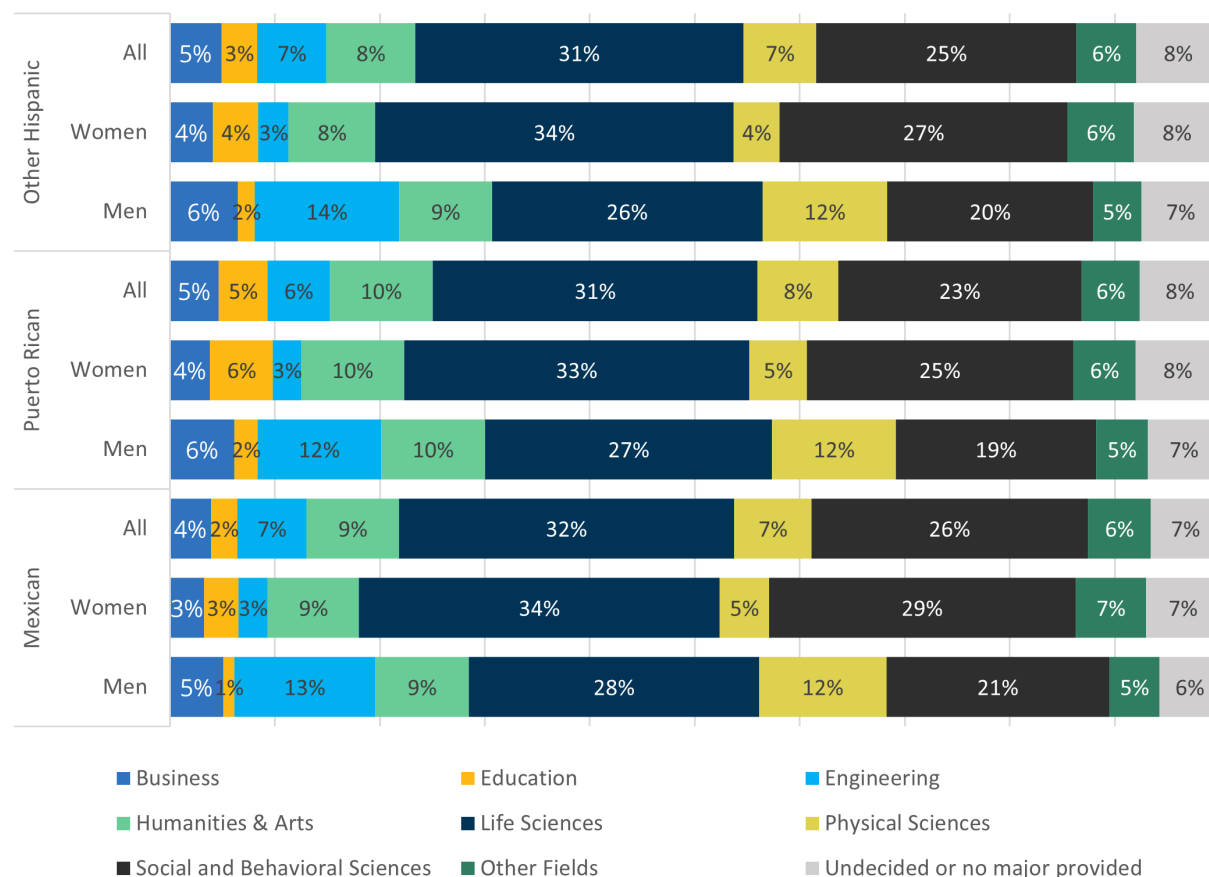
Undergraduate Major Field

Nationally, 36% of bachelor's degrees are conferred in STEM fields, followed by business (19%), other fields (17%), social sciences (13%), humanities (11%), and education (4%; NCES, 2021, Table 322.30).

There are three key points for undergraduate major fields. First, there are minimal differences between the three Hispanic subgroups in their choices of major field (see Figure 8 and Table A5). Second, within each group, gender differences in some majors are moderate to substantial. Among each Hispanic subgroup, women had a moderately higher rate of majoring in the social and behavioral sciences. Third, although *STEM* is often used as a collective term for science, technology, engineering, and math fields, it is useful to break down each component. In all three Hispanic subgroups, more men than women majored in physical sciences and

engineering (focusing on nonliving things), while more women than men majored in life sciences (focusing on living things).

Figure 8. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Undergraduate Major Field and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



Other fields include, among others, architecture and environmental design, communications and journalism, family and consumer services, law, library and archival studies, public administration, religion and theology, and social work. Those who indicated undecided, indicated any department not listed, or did not respond to the question or who provided an invalid answer are included in the undecided or no major provided category. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Undergraduate Grade Point Average

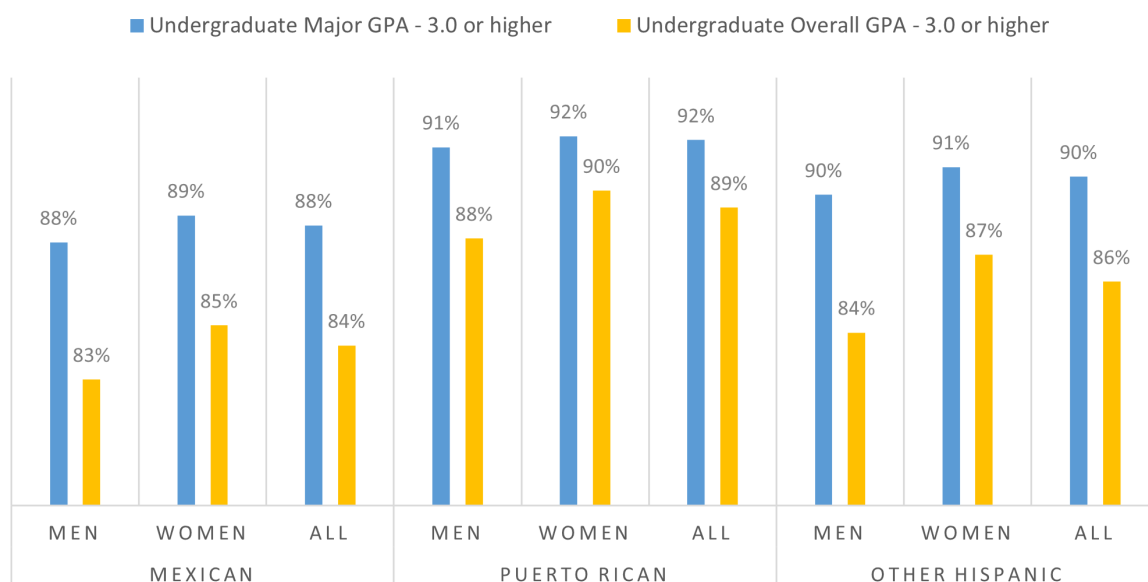
Unlike for undergraduate admissions, department faculty typically make graduate school admissions decisions (Kent & McCarthy, 2016). Although there is no universal minimum GPA admissions committees require, PGS may consult popular forums (e.g., Quora, Academic Stack

Exchange, or Forbes Advisor) that suggest (a) at least a 3.0 GPA, with some variation for more competitive programs, and (b) that graduate school admissions committees tend to prioritize undergraduate major GPA above overall GPA, with possible exceptions if an applicant is applying to a different field than their undergraduate major.

To provide context for the data in this study, the U.S. Department of Education, through the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study, presented GPAs for individuals who earned their bachelor's degrees during the 2007–2008 academic year by selected characteristics (Woo et al., 2012). In the Woo report, race/ethnicity is stated as Hispanic/Latino, and 64% of Hispanic/Latino college graduates reported a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher.

In this study, PGS self-reported their undergraduate major GPAs and their overall GPAs (see Figure 9 and Table A5). Nearly 90% of each of the Hispanic subgroup PGS met the 3.0 or higher academic accomplishment in their undergraduate majors (88% of Mexican PGS, 92% of Puerto Rican PGS, and 90% of other Hispanic PGS).

Figure 9. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by 3.0 or Higher Undergraduate Major Grade Point Average and Overall Grade Point Average and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American. GPA = grade point average.

All three groups' overall GPAs were slightly lower than their undergraduate major GPAs. However, similar patterns of educational achievement were observed: 84% of Mexican PGS, 89% of Puerto Rican PGS, and 86% of other Hispanic PGS earned a 3.0 or higher overall GPA. Few gender differences in GPAs emerged within each Hispanic subgroup.

Research Question 5: What Were Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students' Plans for Graduate Study?

Understanding prospective students' aspirations and goals can help individuals and organizations interested in graduate education better align their offerings with student expectations. This information can also be helpful when advising students to consider where they might go. PGS were asked several broad questions about their plans, covering key aspects such as their intended degrees, fields of study, and preferred learning modalities, including online and in-person formats. Additionally, they provided insights into their anticipated enrollment status—full-time or part-time—and geographic preferences for where they planned to pursue their graduate education. These insights offer a comprehensive picture of Hispanic PGS' graduate education objectives (see Table A6).

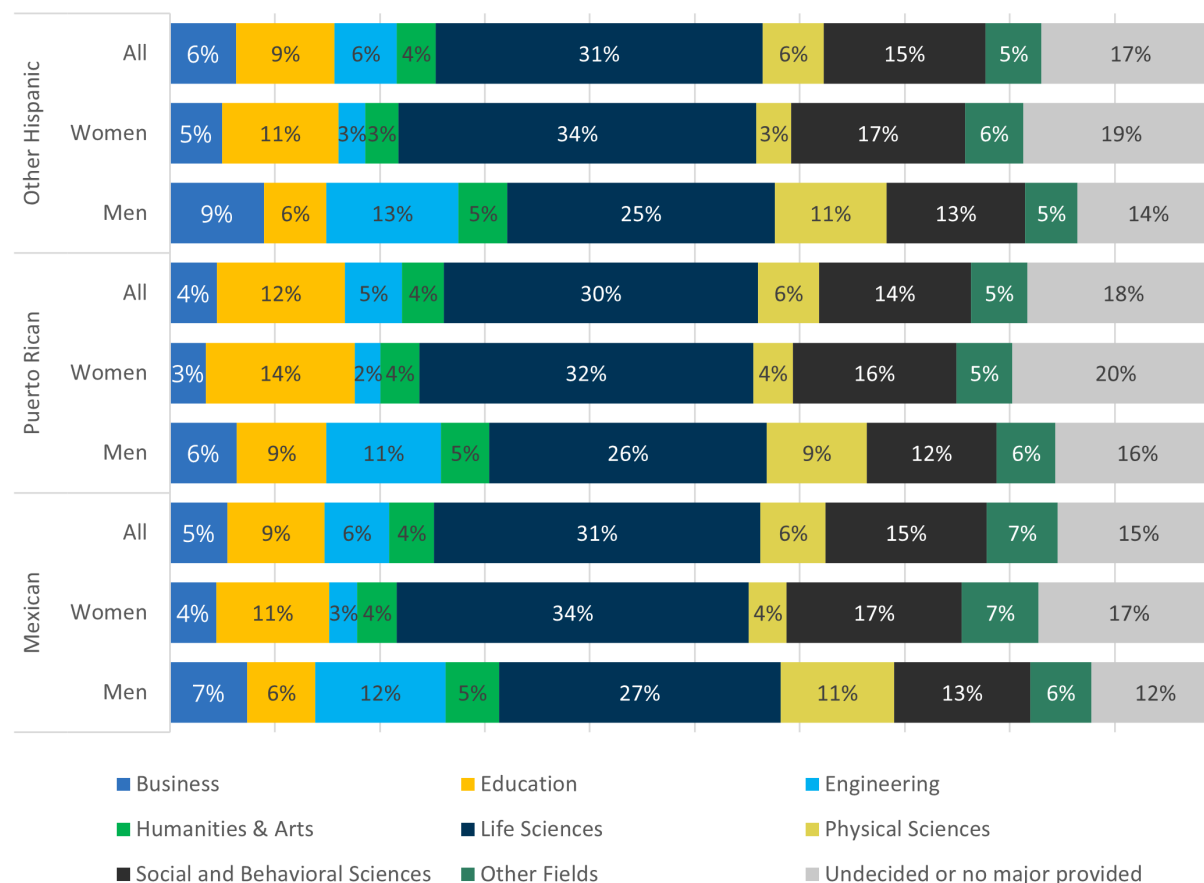
Graduate Degree Objective

In the academic year 2020–2021, four out of five graduate degrees conferred were for master's degrees (NCES, 2022, Table 319.10). The doctoral degrees conferred included individuals who earned a PhD, an EdD, an MD, a DDS, a law degree, or another comparable degree at the doctoral level.

A majority of PGS from each Hispanic subgroup aimed to earn a master's degree, with aspirations ranging from 51% of Puerto Rican PGS to 55% of Mexican PGS to 57% of other Hispanic PGS (see Table A6). However, aspirations for a doctoral degree vary more notably: Puerto Rican PGS had the highest percentage of individuals aspiring to a doctorate (43%), followed by Mexican PGS at 39% and other Hispanic PGS at 36%.

Interestingly, these differences may be influenced by gender, as men and women from all three groups differed in their aspirations to earn master's and doctoral degrees.

Figure 10. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students by Intended Graduate Field of Study and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



Other fields include, among others, architecture and environmental design, communications and journalism, family and consumer services, law, library and archival studies, public administration, religion and theology, and social work. Those who indicated undecided, indicated any department not listed, or did not respond to the question or who provided an invalid answer are included in the undecided or no major provided category. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Intended Graduate Major Field

The intended fields of graduate study are presented while considering the possible shifts in the field of study from the undergraduate to the graduate level. It is valuable to note that admissions test requirements at either the graduate school or department level may drive some of the observed outcomes.

Some observations about participation in undergraduate majors hold at the intended graduate major field (see Figure 10 and Table A6). First, across the three Hispanic subgroups,

PGS intended to major in a STEM field (41%–44%), followed by social and behavioral sciences (14%–15%). Second, the gendered patterns of majoring in different fields under the STEM umbrella continue: Women intended to major in life sciences, while men intended to major in engineering and physical sciences.

At the graduate level, Hispanic PGS indicated more interest in education, selected by 9%–12%, and business, chosen by 4%–6%, than they had at the undergraduate level.

Across the three Hispanic subgroups, 56%–58% of PGS planned to continue their graduate studies in the same field as their undergraduate majors. For the Mexican and other Hispanic PGS, men planned to continue in the same major fields at a higher rate than women.

Program Format

In the academic year 2019–2020, 64% of all postbaccalaureate students reported taking a class taught entirely online. Among those students, 46% reported that their entire degree program was online (NCES, 2022, Table 311.32).

Within this broader context, most Hispanic PGS across the three subgroups planned to enroll in an on-campus graduate program (68%–72%), with a hybrid enrollment format being the next most popular (17%–20%; see Table A6). Within the Puerto Rican PGS subgroup, men were more likely than women to prefer studying on campus (72% vs. 68%).

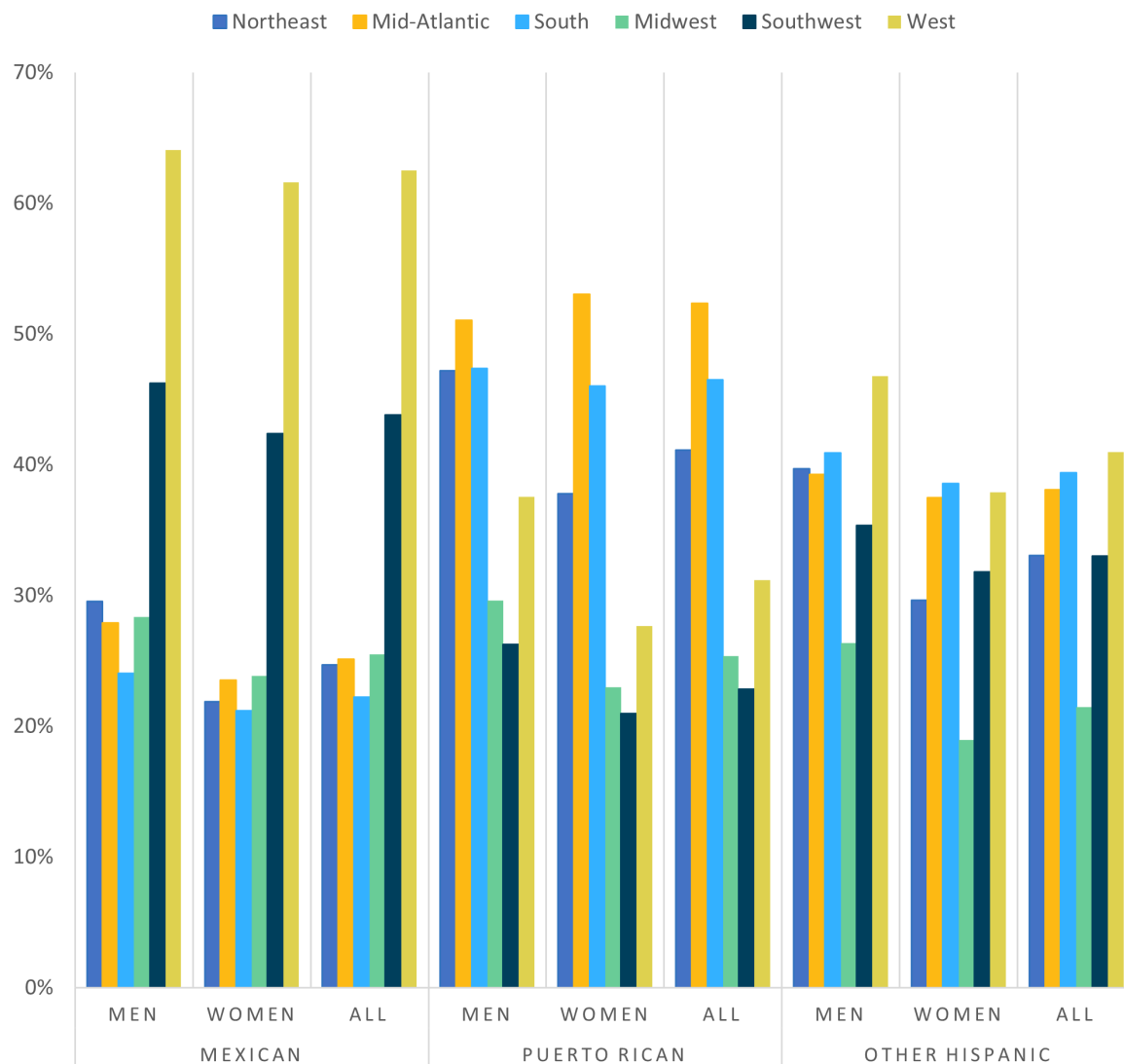
Enrollment Preference

In fall 2021, 57% of postbaccalaureate students nationally had full-time status (NCES, 2023b, Table 303.45). Nationally, 60% of men and 55% of women attended full-time. In light of these figures, most Hispanic PGS planned to enroll full-time (81%–86%), with negligible gender differences (see Table A6).

Preferred Geographic Region for Graduate Study

All individuals were asked a general question about the geographic regions in the United States¹⁰ and outside of the United States where they preferred to attend graduate school. Regarding their U.S. and global options, the majority indicated one region, and approximately 15% indicated two regions (see Table A6). For all three groups, women indicated one region slightly more often than did men.

Figure 11. Preferred Regions to Attend Graduate School Within the United States by Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021



Respondents were able to indicate multiple regions. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Generally, Hispanic PGS preferred studying in the United States, but their regional preferences varied (see Figure 11 and Table A6). Mexican PGS selected the West at substantially higher rates (63%) than either Puerto Rican (31%) or other Hispanic (41%) PGS. They also were interested in the Southwest at higher rates than their Puerto Rican or other Hispanic peers were (44%, 23%, and 33%, respectively). Puerto Rican PGS were clearly more interested in the South

(47%) and the Mid-Atlantic (52%) than were Mexican PGS (25% and 22%, respectively) and other Hispanic PGS (38% and 39%, respectively). Other Hispanic PGS displayed less variation in their regional preferences for graduate education. There were some gender differences in geographic preference within the Puerto Rican and other Hispanic subgroups.

Outside of the United States, there was modest interest in Western Europe (9%–10%), Canada (7%–10%), and Australia/New Zealand and Pacific Islands (4%–5%). The greatest difference among the three groups was their possible interest in pursuing graduate study in Latin America—Mexico/Central and South America/Caribbean. Puerto Rican PGS indicated the most interest in studying in Latin America (9%), followed by Mexican PGS (5%) and other Hispanic PGS (3%).

Research Question 6: What Were Their Emerging Graduate School Choice Sets?

This section focused on the early construction of PGS' graduate program choice sets (see Table A7). In constructing their choice sets—the collections of graduate institutions to which they may apply—individuals weigh varied factors, for instance, the number of programs to apply to. According to one commonly used discussion forum, graduate school applicants may refer to the rule of thumb when applying to a degree program, which is to consider applying to four to six programs (GradCafe Editor, 2024). Another set of factors is related to the characteristics of the prospective programs. The Council of Graduate Schools (2021) suggested that individuals consider program fit, financial investment, student support services, location, and professional development and career support.

Although insights into how PGS settled on specific graduate programs and their exhaustive or final collections of institutions in their choice sets are unavailable for this study, information regarding the graduate schools and departments they were considering is accessible. Two caveats may have shaped the parameters of the choice set presented. First, on test day, individuals can designate up to four graduate institutions and departments and fellowship sponsors to receive scores as part of the test fee. Individuals who elect to send their GRE General Test scores to additional institutions or to send their scores after test day can do so by ordering additional score reports for a fee (ETS, n.d.). Second, PGS may apply to graduate programs that do not require GRE scores, and thus these programs would not be reflected in the observed emerging choice set.

Graduate programs and schools are typically divisions in a college or university that award graduate degrees. For example, the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, which has master's and doctoral programs, is part of the University of Texas at Austin. The data presented in this section describe the college or university (e.g., the University of Texas at Austin) rather than specific graduate programs. An institution is counted only once per individual, even if the individual sent scores to multiple graduate programs at a single university (e.g., the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and the Graduate School at the University of Texas at Austin).

Choice Set Size

Across the three Hispanic subgroups, approximately 80% of PGS sent their scores to graduate institutions and, therefore, had a choice set (see Table A7). It is not surprising that fewer than 100% of PGS sent score reports, as GRE scores are good for 5 calendar years from when individuals take the test. Even though the BIQ does not ask questions about the costs of applying to graduate programs or the ease or hardship of paying those costs, women most likely cover the cost of applications, which in a field like psychology can range from \$0 to \$125 per application plus the cost of official transcripts (Weiss & Tamura, 2023). According to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (2018), the average cost of a transcript ranges from \$5.00 to \$9.99. If or how these costs may have factored into choice set construction (e.g., number or type of programs) has yet to be discovered.

In terms of sending scores to graduate schools, Mexican PGS, Puerto Rican PGS, and other Hispanic PGS were relatively comparable; there were differences by gender within each of the groups. The 36,693 Mexican PGS with graduate school choice sets had approximately 125,635 choices with a median of 3 graduate institutions per PGS; the 10,329 Puerto Rican PGS with graduate school choice sets had approximately 34,649 choices with a median of 3;¹¹ and the 49,522 other Hispanic PGS with graduate school choice sets had approximately 172,060 choices, also with a median of 3.

Across the three groups, the majority of PGS typically included four or fewer institutions in their choice sets (76%–77%), followed by 5–10 institutions (19%–20%) and 11 or more institutions (3%–4%). Men and women in each Hispanic subgroup were comparable in the size of their choice sets.

In addition to presenting whether women included a graduate school with a certain institutional characteristic (yes/no), the intensity of this characteristic in the graduate school choice set is presented (see Table A7). An example may best illustrate the difference (see Table 5). Consider two women, each of whom has four graduate programs in her choice set. If the women’s preference for a graduate program at a private institution is considered, the fact that each chose at least one private graduate school would be reported. This would mask that for Prospective Graduate Student 1, three out of four (75%) graduate programs were at private institutions, whereas for Prospective Graduate Student 2, two were graduate programs at private institutions (50%).

Table 5. Hypothetical Example of Graduate School Choices

Individual	Graduate school choice			
	1	2	3	4
Prospective Graduate Student 1: Public/private institution	Public	Private	Private	Private
Prospective Graduate Student 2: Public/private institution	Public	Public	Private	Private

Where in the United States Would They Like to Go to Graduate School?

Individuals’ graduate school choice sets provide us with a second opportunity to learn about their geographic preferences. Here PGS’ choice sets are restricted to U.S. institutions to learn if Hispanic PGS include a constellation of graduate schools across the country in their choice sets or if they narrow their geographic considerations. There may be a precedent for geographic narrowing based on selecting an undergraduate institution. In their transition from high school to college, the majority (56.2%) of public, 4-year college students attend an institution under an hour’s drive away from home (fewer than 50 miles), and nearly 70% attend within 2 hours of their homes (fewer than 100 miles; Wozniak, 2018). Two patterns have been observed when individuals graduate from college (EAB, 2018). Graduates of state universities tend to remain close to their alma maters—often staying within state lines. The typical graduate lives within 330 miles of the university, and 40% stay within 50 miles. The second pattern is for graduates of elite universities to move to major economic hubs—usually near their alma maters.

Let us consider a woman who lived in California and who applied to four graduate programs—one each in California, Washington, Arizona, and Florida (see Figure 12). As she resides in California, this choice would be in-state as well as within the U.S. Census Pacific

Division and Region where she resides. A graduate institution in Washington would be considered out-of-state and in the same U.S. Census division and region. The institution in Arizona would be considered out-of-state, in the same U.S. Census division, and out of the region. The Florida-based institution would be out-of-state and out of U.S. Census division and region.

Figure 12. U.S. Map With Hypothetical Graduate School Choices



In this figure, California is the prospective graduate students' state of residence.

Pursuing Graduate Study at In-State or Out-of-State Colleges and Universities

The majority of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS were considering applying to at least one graduate school in the states where they resided (see California in the example in Figure 12; 84%, 79%, and 81%, respectively); among those who considered an in-state institution, those institutions represented three-fourths of their choice sets (see Figure 13 and Table A7).

More than half of Hispanic PGS included at least one out-of-state graduate program in their choice sets (see Washington, Arizona, or Florida in the example in Figure 12). Within the Puerto Rican subgroup, men included out-of-state graduate school programs slightly more often.

Across the three subgroups, if they included an out-of-state institution, they represented 70%–75% of their choice sets.

Pursuing Graduate Study in Their U.S. Census Division or Region

Across the three Hispanic subgroups, PGS included graduate programs in the census divisions where they resided in their choice sets at nearly comparable rates (88%–89%; see Washington in the example in Figure 12; see Table A7). For those PGS who included a graduate program in their census divisions, those institutions made up nearly 80% of their choice sets.

Less popular was considering a graduate program outside their census divisions but within their census regions (18%–19%; see Arizona in the example in Figure 12). When included in a choice set, these institutions represented slightly more than one-third of the institutions in the choice sets (35%–36%).

More than one-third of Hispanic PGS included a graduate program outside their census regions (38%–39%; see Florida in the example in Figure 12). Puerto Rican and other Hispanic men did this more often than their female counterparts. For those who included them, graduate programs outside their census regions represented 57%–59% of individual choice sets.

What Are the Profiles of the Institutions in Their Graduate School Choice Sets?

Now that their geographic preferences for where to pursue graduate studies are known, the next consideration is the types of institutions included in PGS' choice sets.

Intend to Pursue Graduate Study at Their Undergraduate Institution

There are pros and cons to earning a graduate degree at the same institution where one received one's undergraduate degree (Bonacolta, 2021; Lovick, 2020). Some of the pros to continuing at the same place include already being a member of the academic community, possible tuition discounts, and, in some cases, finishing or continuing one's undergraduate research. In addition, PGS would not incur relocation costs and could retain existing networks outside of the university community. Some cons are that one may be restricting one's network, limiting one's exposure to how academic departments are run in other places, and potentially limiting one's international experience. While the reason for excluding them from their undergraduate institutions is unknown, one factor may be that it offers limited or no graduate programs (e.g., a Carnegie classification baccalaureate college).

The three Hispanic subgroups differed in their thinking about attending their undergraduate institutions for graduate school (see Table A7). Other Hispanic PGS (52%) and Mexican PGS (50%) denoted greater interest in continuing their studies at their undergraduate institutions compared to Puerto Rican PGS (44%). For those PGS who included their undergraduate institutions, it represented nearly 60% of their choice sets. Within each Hispanic subgroup, men and women were comparable, including their undergraduate institutions and their representations in their choice sets.

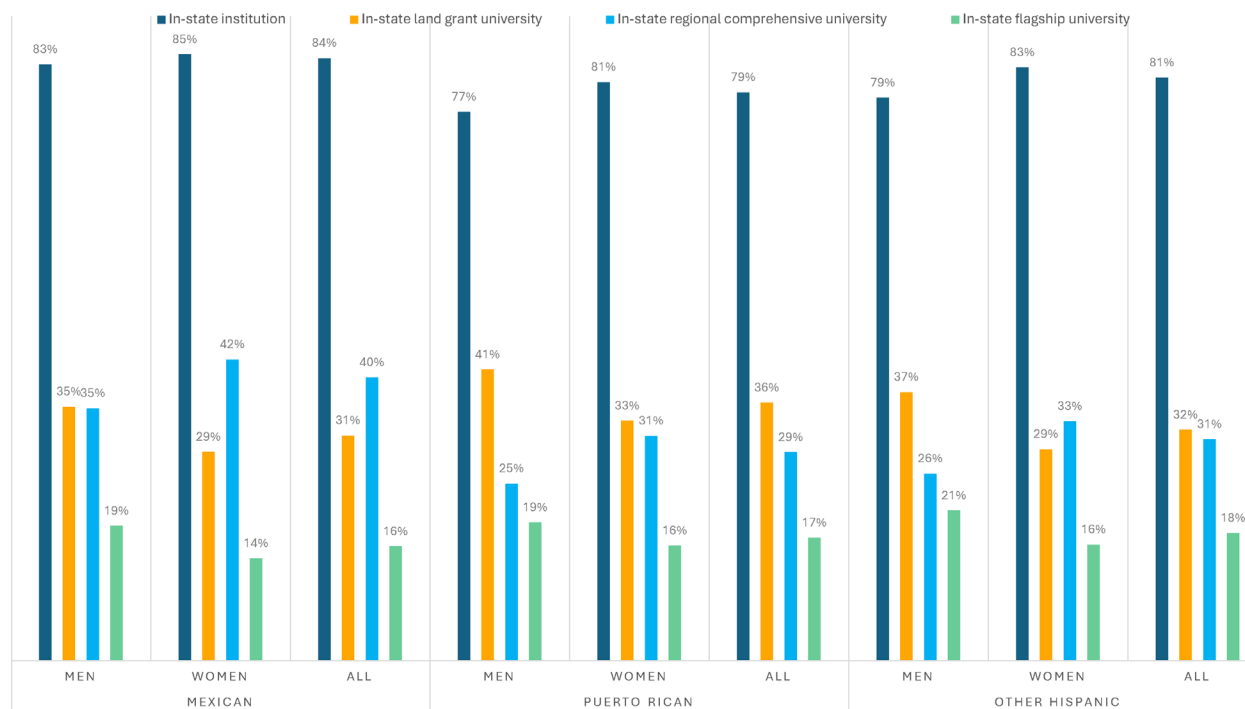
Land Grant Institutions, Regional Comprehensive Universities, and Flagship Universities in Their State of Residence

One-third of Hispanic PGS were considering a land grant institution in their states of residence for graduate school (e.g., North Carolina State University, Raleigh; see Figure 13 and Table A7). While there is similar interest across the three Hispanic subgroups, men indicated a greater preference within each group. If included in the choice sets, land grant institutions represented approximately 45% of the choices in each group.

The three groups differed in considering attending a regional comprehensive institution in their states of residence for graduate school (e.g., North Carolina Central University). Mexican PGS included one in their choice sets considerably more often than did their Puerto Rican and other Hispanic PGS peers (40% vs. 29% and 31%, respectively). Within each subgroup, women indicated a greater preference for a regional comprehensive university. Regional comprehensive institutions ranged from 18% to 24% of choices if included in the choice sets.

Fewer than one-quarter of Hispanic PGS included the flagship university in their states of residence in their choice sets (16%–18%) with only slight gender differences (e.g., UNC Chapel Hill). For those PGS who included the flagship state university, it represented roughly 40% of their choice sets.

Figure 13. Detailed Hispanic Prospective Graduate Students' Inclusion of Possible Graduate School Choices in Their State of Residence and by Institutional Type by Racial/Ethnic Group (U.S. Citizens), July 2016-June 2021



Apart from the University of Idaho, the University of North Dakota, and the University of South Dakota, there is no overlap between the state flagship university and the regional comprehensive universities in a state. Racial/ethnic groups are defined as follows: Mexican = Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano; Puerto Rican = Puerto Rican; other Hispanic = other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American.

Institution Control and Student Body Size

In fall 2021, 50% of postgraduate students nationally enrolled at public institutions, 43% at nonprofit private institutions, and 7% at for-profit institutions (NCES, 2022, Table 306.5).

Across the three groups, there were moderate differences in public institution inclusion (see Table A7). Mexican PGS had the highest rate of including at least one public institution in their choice sets (87%), followed by other Hispanic PGS (83%) and Puerto Rican PGS (80%). For those PGS who included a public institution, they represented 74%–79% of their choice sets.

There was more variation across the three Hispanic groups in their preferences for possibly attending a private nonprofit institution. Puerto Rican PGS (62%) and other Hispanic PGS (58%) were fairly similar in having at least one private institution in their choice sets, compared to 52% of Mexican PGS. This difference was reflected in the representation of private

institutions in the choice sets. If included, they represented 63% of Puerto Rican PGS and 62% of other Hispanic PGS choice sets, compared to 56% of Mexican PGS choice sets.

Private for-profit graduate programs were less popular, with approximately 5% of Hispanic PGS including one in their choice sets. This selection pattern may be due to private for-profit graduate programs having different GRE requirements for admissions.

There was some variation among the three Hispanic subgroups regarding the sizes of the institutions where they might like to earn their graduate degrees (see Table A7). Eighty-three percent of Mexican PGS included one, compared to 79% of other Hispanic PGS and 74% of Puerto Rican PGS. For those Hispanic PGS who did include a large institution, they accounted for 71%–75% of their choice sets.

Minority-Serving Institutions

Among the 771 MSIs, 454 (59%) are 4-year institutions, and not all necessarily offer graduate degrees. There were considerable differences across the three groups regarding including at least one MSI in their graduate school choice sets (see Table A7). Mexican PGS included an MSI in their choice sets most often (65%) compared to other Hispanic PGS (56%) and Puerto Rican PGS (47%). For those who included an MSI in their choice sets, MSIs ranged from representing 55% to 63% of the choice sets.

A closer look at the types of MSIs Hispanic PGS were considering for graduate school echoes their undergraduate enrollment patterns. HSIs were the most popular type of MSI for all three Hispanic subgroups to include in their choice sets. This ranged from 57% of Mexican PGS to 48% of other Hispanics to 37% of Puerto Rican PGS including an HSI. Within the other Hispanic subgroup, women included an HSI at a higher rate than men. For those Hispanic PGS who did include an HSI in their choice sets, they ranged from presenting 56% to 63% of their choice sets.

AANAPISI graduate institutions were the second most popular type of MSI included in choice sets. Similar patterns to HSIs being included were observed. Mexican PGS included an AANAPISI in their choice sets at the highest rate (35%), followed by other Hispanic PGS (25%) and Puerto Rican PGS (21%). If an AANAPISI was included in the choice set, it represented roughly 45% of the choice set composition.

Single-Sex Colleges

Single-sex colleges are primarily bachelor's degree institutions that award master's degrees and postbaccalaureate certificates, and a few award doctoral degrees. Individuals from all three Hispanic subgroups indicated a limited interest in a single-sex institution for graduate school (1%–4%; see Table A7). Women's colleges were selected more often than men's colleges.

Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education

Carnegie-classified doctoral-granting institutions were well represented in Hispanic PGS' choice sets (87%–89%) with minimal gender differences (see Table A7). For those who did include a Carnegie doctoral institution, they represented 84%–87% of institutions in their choice sets. While approximately one-third of PGS in each Hispanic subgroup included a Carnegie-classified master's institution in their choice sets, women did so more often than men in each subgroup. When included in their choice sets, they represented more than half of their choices.

Fewer than one-quarter of Hispanic PGS included a Carnegie-classified special focus 4-year (e.g., Relay Graduate School of Education, Pardee RAND Graduate School) in their choice sets. They represented approximately 40% of the choices if they were in the choice sets.

Association of American Universities Member University

Nearly half of all Hispanic PGS' graduate school choice sets included at least one AAU member institution (49%–51%; see Table A7). Only in the other Hispanic subgroup did men include an AAU institution more frequently than women. For those PGS who included one, the AAU institution represented approximately 60% of the institutions in the choice sets.

Selected Highlights

The data represent 120,445 Hispanic individuals aspiring to graduate education, collected over 5 years. Key differences emerged across the three Hispanic subgroups—Mexican ($n = 45,098$), Puerto Rican ($n = 12,684$), and other Hispanic PGS ($n = 62,483$)—in several areas. For example, roughly 68% of these students were 25 years of age or younger, with many younger than 22 years of age. While the three groups share six states where they reside in high numbers, each subgroup also has at least one unique state where they are present in significant numbers. More than two-thirds of students in each group attended a public or private baccalaureate institution in their states of residence. Parental education varied across the subgroups, and in all

three, more men than women majored in physical sciences and engineering, while more women than men pursued life sciences. A master's degree was the most common graduate degree objective, with greater interest among women than men. Additionally, there were notable differences across the groups regarding including at least one MSI in their graduate school choice sets.

Following are selected data highlights from the findings.

Q1. Who Were the Prospective Graduate Students?

- **Age.** For Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS, roughly 68% of PGS are 25 years of age or younger, with many being under 22 years. More women than men were in the youngest age group within each Hispanic subgroup.

Q2. Where Did Prospective Graduate Students Reside?

- **Top 10 States.** The three Hispanic PGS groups share six states where they reside in high numbers—California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New York, and Texas. Each subgroup has at least one unique state where they are present in significant numbers (i.e., Arizona for Mexican PGS, North Carolina for Puerto Rican PGS, and Virginia for other Hispanic PGS).
- **Regional Distribution.** There are striking differences in the census regions and divisions where Hispanic subgroups live.

Q3. What Were Their Education and Work Experiences?

- **Enrollment.** For each Hispanic subgroup, most individuals were enrolled in college (34%–38%) or unenrolled college graduates (35%–42%).
- **Work Experience.** Across the three Hispanic subgroups, at least half of PGS reported less than 1 year of work experience upon completing their undergraduate degrees.

Q4. What Were Their Undergraduate Experiences?

- **In-State Attendance.** Across the three groups, more than two-thirds of PGS were attending/attended a public or private baccalaureate institution in their states of residence: Mexican PGS at 85%, Hispanic PGS at 82%, and Puerto Rican PGS at 78%.

- **MSI Attendance.** There were differences among the Hispanic subgroups in enrollment at an MSI for their baccalaureate degrees: Puerto Rican PGS at 37%, Hispanic PGS at 42%, and Mexican PGS at 51%.
- **First-Generation College Student.** Parental education varied across the groups. Mexican PGS had the highest occurrence of having no parent with a bachelor's degree (67%), with 52% of Hispanic PGS and 41% of Puerto Rican PGS reporting the same level of parental education.
- **Pell Grant Eligibility.** While Puerto Rican and other Hispanic PGS narrowly miss the majority threshold, with percentages hovering just below 50%, it is important to highlight that nearly 50% of each group is Pell-eligible.
- **Top Undergraduate Majors.** The three Hispanic subgroups of PGS mirrored one another in their undergraduate major fields. STEM overshadowed the other major fields, with nearly half of PGS majoring in STEM. In all three Hispanic subgroups, more men than women majored in physical sciences and engineering (focusing on nonliving things), while more women than men majored in life sciences (focusing on living things).
- **GPA.** Nearly 90% of PGS in each Hispanic subgroup had an undergraduate major GPA of 3.0 or higher: 88% of Mexican PGS, 92% of Puerto Rican PGS, and 90% of other Hispanic PGS.

Q5. What Were Prospective Graduate Students' Plans for Graduate Study?

- **Degree Goals.** A master's degree was the most common graduate degree objective for all Hispanic subgroups and by subgroup, with greater interest for women than for men. At the doctoral level, differences among the Hispanic subgroups were observed, with 43% of Puerto Rican PGS expressing interest in a doctorate, followed by 39% of Mexican PGS and 36% of other Hispanic PGS.
- **Continuity in Field.** Across the three Hispanic subgroups, 56%–58% of PGS planned to continue their graduate studies in the same fields as their undergraduate majors. For the Mexican and other Hispanic subgroups, men planned to continue in the same major field at a higher rate than women.

- **Geographic Preferences.** Levels of interest in attending graduate school in different regions of the United States varied according to the Hispanic subgroup, and there were some gender differences within the subgroups.

Q6. What Were Their Emerging Graduate School Choice Sets?

- **In-State Preference.** The majority of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic PGS included at least one in-state graduate program in their choice sets; among those who considered an in-state institution, those institutions represented three-fourths of the institutions in their choice sets.
- **Undergraduate Alma Mater.** The three Hispanic subgroups differed in their thinking about attending their undergraduate institutions for graduate school. Other Hispanic PGS and Mexican PGS indicated greater interest in continuing their studies at their undergraduate institutions compared to Puerto Rican PGS. For those PGS who included their undergraduate institutions, they represented nearly 60% of their choice sets.
- **Flagship State University.** In general, Hispanic PGS were not planning to pursue graduate studies at the flagship state university in their states of residence (16%–18%).
- **MSI Preference.** There were considerable differences across the three groups regarding including at least one MSI in their graduate school choice sets. Mexican PGS included an MSI the most often in their choice sets compared to other Hispanic PGS and Puerto Rican PGS. For those who included an MSI in their choice sets, MSIs ranged from representing 55% to 63% of the choice sets. HSIs and AANAPISIs were the most often included types of MSI.

Application of Research

The detailed profiles of PGS provide a foundation for enhancing how different segments of the prospective graduate student population are understood and supported. This research offers valuable insights that may help various audiences, including graduate schools, admissions offices, faculty, policymakers, and organizations advocating for diversity and inclusion in graduate education, reassess their own data and practices. Following are several key ways in

which these stakeholders may apply the findings to inform how they evaluate and utilize their own data.

Graduate Schools

In the United States, 1,836 institutions award master's degrees, and 1,066 award doctoral degrees (NCES, 2022). Universities and colleges offering graduate programs may use the findings from this research to reassess their data regarding PGS. Institutions could explore the following:

- How does an institution's current student pool compared to the demographic and academic profiles outlined in this research?
- What insights can an institution gain about their challenges in attracting certain groups of students, particularly underrepresented populations?

Institutions may use these data as they analyze their recruitment strategies, potentially identifying areas for improvement in outreach to local, regional, or national student populations. By comparing the PGS data with their own admissions and enrollment data, schools may discover trends they had yet to consider, helping them refine their efforts to build a more diverse and inclusive graduate student body.

Graduate School Admissions Offices

Admissions offices play a vital role in analyzing trends in their applicant pools. The findings from the PGS profiles may inform how they assess their data, offering new ways to

- evaluate the geographic and academic backgrounds of their applicants
- understand whether they are reaching the prospective students who align with their institution's strategic priorities

This research may help admissions teams examine their recruitment data through a new lens, focusing on regions or demographics that may be underrepresented in their applicant pools. By examining their data in the context of the broader national trends revealed in the PGS research, they may more effectively target outreach efforts and refine their recruitment strategies in collaboration with faculty.

Graduate Programs and Faculty

Faculty are deeply involved in the graduate admissions process, particularly at the departmental level. The insights from this research may help faculty analyze their program data in several ways:

- **Selection of Applicants.** Faculty may use the findings to review how their applicant pool compares to national trends in academic preparation, research interests, and demographic diversity. This comparison may lead to a better understanding of gaps or opportunities in their admissions process.
- **Admissions Criteria.** The research may prompt faculty to reassess their admissions criteria, exploring whether they are attracting students who align with the department's research priorities and long-term goals.
- **Recruitment and Outreach.** Faculty may look at where their current applicants come from and assess whether there are untapped feeder institutions or geographic regions. The data may inform how faculty evaluate their recruitment efforts and suggest new partnerships with other institutions or organizations.

By examining their own admissions data in light of these broader trends, faculty may better understand how to attract academically prepared students who are aligned with the department's research goals.

Policymakers and Government Agencies

Policymakers responsible for shaping higher education policies may use this research to guide how they analyze existing data on graduate education access and financial aid programs. The profiles of PGS may provide a broader context for understanding issues related to

- equity in access to graduate education, particularly among underrepresented groups
- the effectiveness of existing financial aid programs in ensuring that support reaches the students who are most in need of financial support

By comparing the national trends to their data on program effectiveness, policymakers may make informed decisions about where to allocate resources and which policy adjustments may be necessary to improve access and equity in graduate education.

Organizations Focused on Diversity and Inclusion

Advocacy groups promoting equity in higher education may use these findings to reexamine their data and refine their focus. The PGS data may inform how they evaluate the effectiveness of their diversity efforts and how well they are reaching key populations, such as

- first-generation students, Black and Hispanic students, or women in STEM
- students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or rural areas

By analyzing their data through the lens of the PGS findings, these organizations may assess whether they are effectively directing resources and support. They may also identify new opportunities for outreach or scholarship programs aimed at underserved populations.

Undergraduate Institutions

The findings from this research may help undergraduate institutions as they analyze their data related to student outcomes and graduate school preparation. Institutions may

- evaluate their students' academic preparation and career aspirations in light of broader trends among PGS
- compare where their graduates are applying for graduate school with national trends and assess whether their students are aiming for the right types of institutions

These data may inform how undergraduate institutions improve their advising and graduate school preparation services, ensuring that their students are well prepared for the subsequent stage of education. They may also identify potential gaps in support for students considering graduate education and develop programs to address these needs.

Future Research

Building on the current findings, several promising areas for future research could deepen our understanding of PGS and the dynamics of graduate education access, diversity, and success. This future research would help fill key gaps and extend the utility of the data.

Education Researchers and Analysts

Individuals focused on higher education issues, such as equity, access, and diversity, could explore new dimensions of the PGS experience. Future research could aim to

- better understand how diverse student populations, including students from underrepresented socioeconomic backgrounds, international students, and students with disabilities, navigate graduate education opportunities
- explore how factors beyond race—such as age, geographic background, and interdisciplinary experience—impact access and success in graduate education

Connect GRE Data to Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems

The variability in the maturity of statewide longitudinal data systems across the United States offers a rich area for research. Identifying states with well-developed systems that connect high school and undergraduate academic data could enable deeper insights into students' educational trajectories. Specifically, this approach could reveal

- how high school academic experiences, such as specific coursework or extracurricular activities, influence students' decisions to pursue graduate education
- which factors in a student's undergraduate experience (e.g., GPA, field of study, institutional type) are most predictive of applying to graduate school

Connect GRE Data to National Student Clearinghouse Data

Linking GRE data with the National Student Clearinghouse could provide a more complete picture of students' paths through higher education. This approach would allow researchers to

- measure how many PGS ultimately enroll in graduate programs, where they choose to attend, and whether they persist to graduation
- analyze trends in graduate program completion rates across different demographic groups or fields of study, helping to identify areas where interventions could improve retention and success

Conduct a Non-U.S. Citizen Study

The current study excluded individuals who self-reported not being U.S. citizens, limiting the analysis to domestic populations. Future research could

- investigate the experiences of non-U.S. citizens navigating the graduate school application process, who may face distinct challenges related to visa requirements, financial aid, or access to specific academic programs

- conduct comparative studies between U.S. citizens and noncitizens, which could reveal important insights into how international students' experiences differ from those of domestic students and how policies could better address their needs

Expand the Graduate School Choice Set Information

The current study was limited to graduate schools where PGS sent their GRE scores, excluding GRE-optional or GRE-not-required programs from analysis. This omission creates a potential gap in understanding the full range of options PGS consider. Future research could

- include data from GRE-optional and GRE-not-required programs to analyze whether including these institutions changes the size and diversity of the choice sets
- examine how the growing trend of graduate programs removing GRE requirements impacts student decisions and overall program competitiveness

Conduct Qualitative Research

The present study focuses primarily on quantitative data, which provides a broad view of the “what” in the graduate school application process. Adding a qualitative component could provide critical insights into the “why” behind these choices:

- Why are so many PGS choosing in-state graduate programs? What financial, social, and academic factors drive these decisions?
- How do personal motivations, career goals, or perceptions of institutional prestige influence which graduate schools students apply to and ultimately attend?

By pursuing these new lines of inquiry, future research can build on the current study's findings and significantly advance the understanding of how students navigate the graduate school application process and succeed in their academic and professional pursuits.

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Appendix

Table A1. Counts and Percentages for Valid and Missing Data for Detailed Hispanic Subgroup Prospective Graduate Students (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Table	Variable description	Valid responses		Missing responses	
		No.	%	No.	%
2	State where GRE test takers resided	119,979	99.6	466	0.4
3	CBSA where GRE test takers resided	118,449	98.3	1,996	1.7
4	Congressional district where GRE test takers resided	119,609	99.3	836	0.7
A2	Age at time of taking the GRE	120,375	99.9	70	0.1
A2	Communicates best in English	120,358	99.9	87	0.1
A2	Documented disability (self-reported)	93,340	77.5	27,105	22.5
A3	U.S. Census region and division where GRE test takers resided	117,821	97.8	2,624	2.2
A4	Current educational level	120,445	100.0	0	0.0
A4	Full-time work experience	102,017	84.7	18,428	15.3
A5	Individual provided undergraduate institution	72,334	60.1	48,111	39.9
A5	Undergraduate institution has IPEDS information	72,195	59.9	48,250	40.1
A5	Undergraduate institution was in their state of residence	70,704	58.7	49,741	41.3
A5	Undergraduate institution is a state land grant institution in their state of residence	72,195	59.9	48,250	40.1
A5	Undergraduate institution is a regional comprehensive university in their state of residence	70,682	58.7	49,763	41.3
A5	Undergraduate institution is the flagship university in their state of residence	70,682	58.7	49,763	41.3
A5	Undergraduate institution—control—public/private/for-profit	72,195	59.9	48,250	40.1
A5	Undergraduate institution has more than 20,000 students	72,195	59.9	48,250	40.1
A5	Undergraduate institution is an MSI	72,195	59.9	48,250	40.1
A5	Undergraduate institution is a single-sex institution	72,195	59.9	48,250	40.1
A5	Undergraduate institution's <i>Barron's Profile of American Colleges</i> classification	68,405	56.8	52,040	43.2
A5	Undergraduate institution's Carnegie classification	71,949	59.7	48,496	40.3
A5	Undergraduate institution is a member of the AAU	72,195	59.9	48,250	40.1

Table	Variable description	Valid responses		Missing responses	
		No.	%	No.	%
A5	Parent educational attainment	113,686	94.4	6,759	5.6
A5	Eligible for a Federal Pell Grant as an undergraduate	108,851	90.4	11,594	9.6
A5	Federal Pell Grant–eligible and first-generation college student	106,668	88.6	13,777	11.4
A5	Undergraduate major field	112,720	93.6	7,725	6.4
A5	Undergraduate major GPA	105,575	87.7	14,870	12.3
A5	Overall undergraduate GPA	105,608	87.7	14,837	12.3
A6	Graduate degree objective	112,668	93.5	7,777	6.5
A6	Intended graduate major field	120,445	100.0	0	0.0
A6	Undergraduate major is the same as intended graduate major field	120,445	100.0	0	0.0
A6	Program format preference for graduate study	110,956	92.1	9,489	7.9
A6	Enrollment preference for graduate study	113,225	94.0	7,220	6.0
A6	Preferred geographic region for graduate study	108,899	90.4	11,546	9.6
A7	Sent at least one GRE score report to a graduate institution with an IPEDS ID	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	Number of GRE score reports sent	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	GSC: may apply to at least one in-state institution	94,469	78.4	25,976	21.6
A7	GSC: may apply to at least one out-of-state institution	94,469	78.4	25,976	21.6
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one institution in U.S. Census division	94,469	78.4	25,976	21.6
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one institution outside U.S. Census division but within region	94,469	78.4	25,976	21.6
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one institution outside U.S. Census region	94,469	78.4	25,976	21.6
A7	GSC : may apply to their undergraduate institution	61,345	50.9	59,100	49.1
A7	GSC : may apply to regional flagship institution in state of residence	94,469	78.4	25,976	21.6
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one regional comprehensive institution in state of residence	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	GSC : may apply to the land grant institution in their state of residence	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one public/private/private-for-profit graduate institution	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one graduate institution with at least 20,000 students	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one graduate program at an MSI	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one graduate program at a single-gender institution	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one graduate institution with Carnegie classification	96,382	80.0	24,063	20.0

Table	Variable description	Valid responses		Missing responses	
		No.	%	No.	%
A7	GSC : may apply to at least one AAU member graduate institution	96,544	80.2	23,901	19.8

Note. $N = 120,445$. AAU = Association of American Universities. CBSA = Core-based statistical area. GPA = grade point average. GSC = graduate school choice. IPEDS = Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. MSI = minority-serving institution.

Table A2. Demographic Profile of Prospective Graduate Students by Detailed Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Age group																		
<22	5,489	34	11,442	40	16,931	38	1,693	37	3,575	43	5,268	41	7,215	34	16,354	40	23,569	38
23–25	5,018	31	8,614	30	13,632	30	1,207	26	2,208	27	3,415	27	6,353	30	12,027	29	18,380	29
26–30	3,480	21	5,182	18	8,662	19	914	20	1,313	16	2,227	17	4,623	22	7,358	18	11,981	19
31–40	1,823	11	2,536	9	4,359	10	539	12	789	10	1,328	10	2,369	11	3,821	9	6,190	10
≥41	543	3	944	3	1,487	3	214	5	401	5	615	5	769	4	1,562	4	2,331	4
Communicates better in English	15,376	94	26,955	94	42,331	94	4,097	90	7,442	90	11,539	90	20,046	94	38,497	94	58,543	94
Two most common native languages (other than English)																		
Spanish	4,756	100	9,389	100	14,145	100	1,569	100	2,415	100	3,984	100	5,155	95	11,279	96	16,434	95
Portuguese	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	202	4	412	3	614	4
Documented disability	610	5	996	4	1,606	5	206	6	371	6	577	6	895	5	1,562	5	2,457	5
If documented disability, type of disability																		
Blind/visually impaired	110	18	203	20	313	19	28	14	57	15	85	15	109	12	216	14	325	13
Deaf/hard of hearing	65	11	87	9	152	9	13	6	28	8	41	7	72	8	112	7	184	7
Learning disability	200	33	333	33	533	33	76	37	145	39	221	38	369	41	679	43	1,048	43
Multiple disabilities	33	5	40	4	73	5	17	8	11	3	28	5	36	4	71	5	107	4
Other	142	23	244	24	386	24	56	27	91	25	147	25	227	25	379	24	606	25
Physical disability	60	10	89	9	149	9	16	8	39	11	55	10	82	9	105	7	187	8

Table A3. U.S. Census Geographic Profile of Prospective Graduate Students by Detailed Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
U.S. Census region																		
West	8,334	51	14,990	52	23,324	52	368	10	541	8	909	8	5,253	25	9,555	23	14,808	24
Midwest	1,553	10	2,813	10	4,366	10	355	10	607	9	962	9	1,473	7	2,386	6	3,859	6
Northeast	647	4	1,177	4	1,824	4	1,423	38	3,147	44	4,570	42	4,239	20	9,524	23	13,763	22
South	5,742	35	9,665	34	15,407	34	1,576	42	2,826	40	4,402	41	10,174	48	19,453	48	29,627	48
U.S. Census division																		
Pacific	6,796	42	12,618	44	19,414	43	252	7	359	5	611	6	3,595	17	6,938	17	10,533	17
Mountain	1,538	9	2,372	8	3,910	9	116	3	182	3	298	3	1,658	8	2,617	6	4,275	7
West North Central	371	2	551	2	922	2	64	2	98	1	162	1	432	2	625	2	1,057	2
East North Central	1,182	7	2,262	8	3,444	8	291	8	509	7	800	7	1,041	5	1,761	4	2,802	5
Middle Atlantic	459	3	910	3	1,369	3	1,198	32	2,750	39	3,948	36	3,469	16	8,169	20	11,638	19
New England	188	1	267	1	455	1	225	6	397	6	622	6	770	4	1,355	3	2,125	3
West South Central	4,511	28	7,586	26	12,097	27	271	7	479	7	750	7	3,784	18	7,428	18	11,212	18
East South Central	204	1	299	1	503	1	89	2	167	2	256	2	324	2	641	2	965	2
South Atlantic	1,027	6	1,780	6	2,807	6	1,216	33	2,180	31	3,396	31	6,066	29	11,384	28	17,450	28

Table A4. Education and Work Experiences of Prospective Graduate Students by Detailed Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Current educational level																		
Currently enrolled in college	6,076	37	10,359	36	16,435	36	1,703	37	3,132	38	4,835	38	7,407	35	13,930	34	21,337	34
Unenrolled college graduate (BA/BS)	6,912	42	12,139	42	19,051	42	1,671	37	2,855	34	4,526	35	9,185	43	16,769	41	25,954	42
Unenrolled master's program graduate	1,720	11	3,353	12	5,073	11	564	12	1,185	14	1,749	14	2,414	11	5,678	14	8,092	13
Enrolled in graduate school	1,059	6	1,527	5	2,586	6	362	8	581	7	943	7	1,375	6	2,570	6	3,945	6
Other	592	4	1,361	5	1,953	4	272	6	539	7	811	6	957	4	2,198	5	3,155	5
Full-time work experience (years)																		
<1	7,727	54	12,795	53	20,522	53	2,121	54	3,747	54	5,868	54	9,154	50	17,333	50	26,487	50
1–2	3,298	23	6,028	25	9,326	24	804	21	1,512	22	2,316	21	4,367	24	8,811	26	13,178	25
3–4	1,386	10	2,465	10	3,851	10	366	9	629	9	995	9	1,967	11	3,659	11	5,626	11
5–7	905	6	1,511	6	2,416	6	274	7	443	6	717	7	1,309	7	2,232	6	3,541	7
≥8	976	7	1,551	6	2,527	7	337	9	580	8	917	8	1,350	7	2,380	7	3,730	7

Note. BA = bachelor of arts. BS = bachelor of science.

Table A5. Undergraduate Experiences of Prospective Graduate Students by Detailed Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Individual provided undergraduate institution	10,370	63	17,680	62	28,050	62	2,747	60	4,749	57	7,496	58	13,081	61	23,707	58	36,788	59
Undergraduate institution has IPEDS information	10,350	63	17,643	61	27,993	62	2,742	60	4,740	57	7,482	58	13,054	61	23,666	58	36,720	59
Undergraduate institution in their state of residence	8,679	84	15,073	86	23,752	85	1,636	76	3,226	79	4,862	78	10,366	80	19,431	82	29,797	82
Undergraduate institution: state land grant institution in their state of residence	1,316	14	1,944	12	3,260	13	279	14	382	10	661	11	1,723	15	2,709	13	4,432	13
Undergraduate institution: regional comprehensive university in their state of residence	3,672	36	6,847	39	10,519	38	447	21	1,072	26	1,519	24	3,137	24	6,843	29	9,980	27
Undergraduate institution: flagship university in their state of residence	1,160	11	1,757	10	2,917	10	318	15	424	10	742	12	1,924	15	2,864	12	4,788	13
Undergraduate institution: control: public	8,219	79	13,758	78	21,977	79	1,960	71	3,282	69	5,242	70	9,885	76	17,642	75	27,527	75
Undergraduate institution: control: private nonprofit	2,104	20	3,836	22	5,940	21	777	28	1,450	31	2,227	30	3,146	24	5,986	25	9,132	25
Undergraduate institution: control: private for-profit	27	0	49	0	76	0	5	0	8	0	13	0	23	0	38	0	61	0
Undergraduate institution: >20,000 students	6,747	65	10,836	61	17,583	63	1,231	45	2,008	42	3,239	43	8,068	62	13,840	58	21,908	60
Undergraduate institution: MSI	5,117	49	9,144	52	14,261	51	988	36	1,780	38	2,768	37	5,084	39	10,379	44	15,463	42
AANAPISI	1,771	17	3,293	19	5,064	18	186	7	488	10	674	9	1,349	10	2,844	12	4,193	11
ANNH	16	0	36	0	52	0.2	5	0.2	9	0.2	14	0.2	18	0.1	39	0.2	57	0.2
HSI	4,656	45	8,256	47	12,912	46	886	32	1,544	33	2,430	32	4,555	35	9,380	40	13,935	38
HBCU	31	0.3	56	0.3	87	0.3	17	0.6	30	0.6	47	0.6	59	0.5	109	0.5	168	0.5
NASNTI	14	0.1	27	0.2	41	0.1	1	0.0	4	0.1	5	0.1	17	0.1	25	0.1	42	0.1
PBI	33	0.3	76	0.4	109	0.4	32	1.2	61	1.3	93	1.2	156	1.2	282	1.2	438	1.2
TCU	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Undergraduate institution: single sex	27	0.3	293	1.7	320	1.1	4	0.1	38	0.8	42	0.6	24	0.2	299	1.3	323	0.9
Men's college	9	0.1	0	0.0	9	0.0	4	0.1	0	0.0	4	0.1	9	0.1	0	0.0	9	0.0
Women's college	18	0.2	293	1.7	311	1.1	0	0.0	38	0.8	38	0.5	15	0.1	299	1.3	314	0.9

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Undergraduate institution: Carnegie classification																		
Doctoral universities	7,238	70	11,870	67	19,108	68	1,855	68	3,018	64	4,873	65	9,913	76	16,802	71	26,715	73
Master's colleges and universities	2,635	26	4,913	28	7,548	27	687	25	1,417	30	2,104	28	2,422	19	5,507	23	7,929	22
Baccalaureate colleges	446	4	809	5	1,255	4	195	7	290	6	485	6	681	5	1,251	5	1,932	5
Undergraduate institution: <i>Barron's</i>																		
Most competitive	1,406	14	1,916	11	3,322	12	338	15	439	11	777	12	1,932	15	2,621	11	4,553	13
Highly competitive	1,355	14	2,169	13	3,524	13	437	20	690	17	1,127	18	2,289	18	3,788	17	6,077	17
Very competitive	2,335	24	4,123	25	6,458	24	735	33	1,403	34	2,138	34	3,806	30	7,052	31	10,858	31
Competitive	3,585	36	6,322	38	9,907	37	604	27	1,290	31	1,894	30	3,527	28	6,876	30	10,403	29
Other	1,201	12	2,245	13	3,446	13	109	5	284	7	393	6	1,063	8	2,465	11	3,528	10
Undergraduate institution: AAU	2,916	28	4,309	24	7,225	26	607	22	783	17	1,390	19	3,563	27	5,111	22	8,674	24
Parental educational attainment																		
No parent bach	10,399	67	18,567	68	28,966	67	1,605	37	3,305	42	4,910	41	9,693	49	20,536	53	30,229	52
One parent bach	2,841	18	4,824	18	7,665	18	1,294	30	2,215	28	3,509	29	4,752	24	9,120	24	13,872	24
One parent bach+	2,388	15	3,938	14	6,326	15	1,405	33	2,280	29	3,685	30	5,529	28	8,995	23	14,524	25
Federal Pell Grant–eligible																		
Yes	8,962	60	15,314	58	24,276	59	1,948	48	3,501	48	5,449	48	9,259	48	18,558	50	27,817	49
No	2,585	17	5,292	20	7,877	19	972	24	2,081	28	3,053	27	4,220	22	8,834	24	13,054	23
Do not know	3,433	23	5,583	21	9,016	22	1,171	29	1,780	24	2,951	26	5,690	30	9,668	26	15,358	27
Federal Pell Grant–eligible and first-generation college student	7,057	48	12,266	48	19,323	48	929	23	1,867	26	2,796	25	6,026	32	12,678	35	18,704	34
Undergraduate major field—detailed																		
Business	830	5	936	3	1,766	4	281	6	317	4	598	5	1,375	6	1,688	4	3,063	5
Education	177	1	941	3	1,118	2	101	2	496	6	597	5	348	2	1,779	4	2,127	3
Engineering	2,188	13	795	3	2,983	7	537	12	226	3	763	6	2,936	14	1,184	3	4,120	7
Humanities and arts	1,466	9	2,506	9	3,972	9	455	10	810	10	1,265	10	1,884	9	3,397	8	5,281	8
Life sciences	4,521	28	9,874	34	14,395	32	1,249	27	2,729	33	3,978	31	5,503	26	14,039	34	19,542	31
Physical sciences	1,984	12	1,343	5	3,327	7	540	12	451	5	991	8	2,536	12	1,810	4	4,346	7

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Social and behavioral sciences	3,472	21	8,397	29	11,869	26	870	19	2,106	25	2,976	23	4,182	20	11,291	27	15,473	25
Other field	783	5	1,929	7	2,712	6	226	5	492	6	718	6	979	5	2,593	6	3,572	6
Undecided or no major provided	938	6	2,018	7	2,956	7	313	7	665	8	978	8	1,595	7	3,364	8	4,959	8
Undergraduate major field—STEM fields aggregated																		
Business	830	5	936	3	1,766	4	281	6	317	4	598	5	1,375	6	1,688	4	3,063	5
Education	177	1	941	3	1,118	2	101	2	496	6	597	5	348	2	1,779	4	2,127	3
STEM fields	8,693	53	12,012	42	20,705	46	2,326	51	3,406	41	5,732	45	10,975	51	17,033	41	28,008	45
Humanities and arts	1,466	9	2,506	9	3,972	9	455	10	810	10	1,265	10	1,884	9	3,397	8	5,281	8
Social and behavioral sciences	3,472	21	8,397	29	11,869	26	870	19	2,106	25	2,976	23	4,182	20	11,291	27	15,473	25
Other field	783	5	1,929	7	2,712	6	226	5	492	6	718	6	979	5	2,593	6	3,572	6
Undecided or no major provided	938	6	2,018	7	2,956	7	313	7	665	8	978	8	1,595	7	3,364	8	4,959	8
Undergraduate major field—STEM yes/no	8,693	53	12,012	42	20,705	46	2,326	51	3,406	41	5,732	45	10,975	51	17,033	41	28,008	45
Undergraduate major GPA																		
3.7–4.0	6,705	45	12,233	49	18,938	48	2,111	52	4,059	56	6,170	54	9,202	49	18,912	53	28,114	52
2.7–3.6	7,348	50	11,757	47	19,105	48	1,837	45	3,011	41	4,848	43	8,887	47	15,445	43	24,332	45
0.0–2.6	715	5	1,099	4	1,814	5	110	3	195	3	305	3	720	4	1,229	3	1,949	4
≥3.0	12,972	88	22,291	89	35,263	88	3,709	91	6,670	92	10,379	92	16,856	90	32,261	91	49,117	90
Undergraduate overall GPA																		
3.7–4.0	5,132	35	9,709	39	14,841	37	1,732	43	3,484	48	5,216	46	7,380	39	15,619	44	22,999	42
2.7–3.6	8,449	57	13,674	54	22,123	56	2,130	52	3,515	48	5,645	50	10,191	54	18,116	51	28,307	52
0.0–2.6	1,182	8	1,711	7	2,893	7	200	5	269	4	469	4	1,252	7	1,863	5	3,115	6
≥3.0	12,211	83	21,263	85	33,474	84	3,574	88	6,525	90	10,099	89	15,900	84	31,103	87	47,003	86

Note. AANAPISI = Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–serving institution. AAU = Association of American Universities. ANNH = Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian–serving institution. GPA = grade point average. HBCU = historically Black college or university. HSI = Hispanic-serving institution. IPEDS = Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. MSI = minority-serving institution. NASNTI = Native American–serving nontribal institution. PBI = predominantly Black institution. STEM = science, technology, engineering, and math. TCU = tribal college or university.

Table A6. Plans for Graduate School of Prospective Graduate Students by Detailed Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Graduate degree objective																		
Doctorate	6,545	42	9,936	37	16,481	39	2,028	47	3,134	40	5,162	43	7,876	40	13,113	34	20,989	36
Master's	7,811	51	15,678	58	23,489	55	1,947	45	4,248	55	6,195	51	10,147	51	22,991	60	33,138	57
MBA	755	5	879	3	1,634	4	189	4	175	2	364	3	1,295	7	1,379	4	2,674	5
JD	105	1	124	0	229	1	25	1	35	0	60	0	116	1	183	0	299	1
Other	245	2	415	2	660	2	101	2	185	2	286	2	388	2	620	2	1,008	2
Intended graduate major field—detailed																		
Business	1,206	7	1,265	4	2,471	5	291	6	285	3	576	4	1,910	9	2,040	5	3,950	6
Education	1,059	6	3,102	11	4,161	9	391	9	1,177	14	1,568	12	1,273	6	4,573	11	5,846	9
Engineering	2,030	12	765	3	2,795	6	498	11	202	2	700	5	2,684	13	1,034	3	3,718	6
Humanities and arts	834	5	1,077	4	1,911	4	210	5	305	4	515	4	994	5	1,306	3	2,300	4
Life sciences	4,385	27	9,643	34	14,028	31	1,210	26	2,638	32	3,848	30	5,432	25	14,038	34	19,470	31
Physical sciences	1,776	11	1,033	4	2,809	6	434	9	312	4	746	6	2,275	11	1,357	3	3,632	6
Social and behavioral sciences	2,114	13	4,796	17	6,910	15	567	12	1,293	16	1,860	14	2,818	13	6,809	17	9,627	15
Other field	955	6	2,097	7	3,052	7	256	6	440	5	696	5	1,058	5	2,284	6	3,342	5
Undecided or no major provided	2,000	12	4,961	17	6,961	15	715	16	1,640	20	2,355	18	2,894	14	7,704	19	10,598	17
Intended graduate major field—STEM fields aggregated																		
Business	1,206	7	1,265	4	2,471	5	291	6	285	3	576	4	1,910	9	2,040	5	3,950	6
Education	1,059	6	3,102	11	4,161	9	391	9	1,177	14	1,568	12	1,273	6	4,573	11	5,846	9
STEM fields	8,191	50	11,441	40	19,632	44	2,142	47	3,152	38	5,294	41	10,391	49	16,429	40	26,820	43
Humanities and arts	834	5	1,077	4	1,911	4	210	5	305	4	515	4	994	5	1,306	3	2,300	4
Social and behavioral sciences	2,114	13	4,796	17	6,910	15	567	12	1,293	16	1,860	14	2,818	13	6,809	17	9,627	15
Other field	955	6	2,097	7	3,052	7	256	6	440	5	696	5	1,058	5	2,284	6	3,342	5
Undecided or no major provided	2,000	12	4,961	17	6,961	15	715	16	1,640	20	2,355	18	2,894	14	7,704	19	10,598	17

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Intended graduate major field—STEM yes/no	8,191	50	11,441	40	19,632	44	2,142	47	3,152	38	5,294	41	10,391	49	16,429	40	26,820	43
Undergraduate major is the same as intended graduate major field	10,381	63	15,990	56	26,371	58	2,705	59	4,522	55	7,227	56	13,106	61	22,698	55	35,804	57
Program format																		
On-campus	11,444	75	18,566	70	30,010	72	3,068	72	5,014	66	8,082	68	14,191	73	25,089	67	39,280	69
Online	672	4	1,401	5	2,073	5	192	5	419	5	611	5	921	5	1,889	5	2,810	5
A combination of both	2,246	15	4,852	18	7,098	17	710	17	1,619	21	2,329	20	3,178	16	8,003	21	11,181	20
Undecided	909	6	1,787	7	2,696	6	270	6	572	8	842	7	1,256	6	2,688	7	3,944	7
Enrollment preference																		
Full-time	13,284	86	23,216	86	36,500	86	3,479	81	6,308	81	9,787	81	16,394	82	31,965	83	48,359	83
Part-time	1,098	7	1,818	7	2,916	7	462	11	789	10	1,251	10	1,814	9	3,357	9	5,171	9
Undecided	1,124	7	2,118	8	3,242	8	358	8	731	9	1,089	9	1,671	8	3,239	8	4,910	8
Preferred region for graduate study (may select more than one)																		
U.S. regions																		
Northeast	4,461	30	5,704	22	10,165	25	1,961	47	2,825	38	4,786	41	7,631	40	10,927	30	18,558	33
Mid-Atlantic	4,209	28	6,140	24	10,349	25	2,121	51	3,967	53	6,088	52	7,547	39	13,827	38	21,374	38
South	3,631	24	5,521	21	9,152	22	1,967	47	3,442	46	5,409	47	7,868	41	14,226	39	22,094	39
Midwest	4,277	28	6,216	24	10,493	25	1,231	30	1,718	23	2,949	25	5,072	26	6,983	19	12,055	21
Southwest	6,974	46	11,058	42	18,032	44	1,090	26	1,568	21	2,658	23	6,802	35	11,722	32	18,524	33
West	9,670	64	16,068	62	25,738	63	1,559	38	2,070	28	3,629	31	8,995	47	13,977	38	22,972	41
Non-U.S. regions																		
Canada	1,268	8	1,478	6	2,746	7	470	11	642	9	1,112	10	1,585	8	2,091	6	3,676	7
Africa	165	1	172	1	337	1	55	1	66	1	121	1	221	1	252	1	473	1
Asia	414	3	320	1	734	2	122	3	94	1	216	2	549	3	470	1	1,019	2
Australia/New Zealand	672	4	946	4	1,618	4	237	6	353	5	590	5	963	5	1,356	4	2,319	4
Latin America	851	6	1,218	5	2,069	5	392	9	634	8	1,026	9	753	4	1,202	3	1,955	3
Middle East	172	1	173	1	345	1	56	1	55	1	111	1	265	1	250	1	515	1

Variable	Mexican						Puerto Rican						Other Hispanic					
	Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total		Men		Women		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Western Europe	1,647	11	1,871	7	3,518	9	543	13	633	8	1,176	10	2,313	12	2,764	7	5,077	9
Eastern Europe and Russia	423	3	470	2	893	2	143	3	159	2	302	3	579	3	671	2	1,250	2
Count ALL regions																		
1	7,916	52	15,339	59	23,255	56	1,850	45	3,974	53	5,824	50	9,653	50	21,547	58	31,200	56
2	2,086	14	3,667	14	5,753	14	633	15	1,125	15	1,758	15	2,636	14	5,287	14	7,923	14
3	1,452	10	2,402	9	3,854	9	495	12	747	10	1,242	11	2,049	11	3,507	10	5,556	10
4	918	6	1,321	5	2,239	5	284	7	466	6	750	6	1,246	6	1,898	5	3,144	6
5	539	4	753	3	1,292	3	157	4	264	4	421	4	733	4	1,101	3	1,834	3
≥6	2,176	14	2,602	10	4,778	12	735	18	902	12	1,637	14	2,909	15	3,530	10	6,439	11
Number of U.S. regions																		
0	39	0	59	0	98	0	67	2	136	2	203	2	59	0	131	0	190	0
1	8,280	55	15,928	61	24,208	59	1,925	46	4,095	55	6,020	52	10,016	52	22,205	60	32,221	57
2	2,211	15	3,874	15	6,085	15	675	16	1,159	15	1,834	16	2,816	15	5,621	15	8,437	15
3	1,567	10	2,441	9	4,008	10	536	13	778	10	1,314	11	2,262	12	3,698	10	5,960	11
4	857	6	1,221	5	2,078	5	261	6	421	6	682	6	1,205	6	1,698	5	2,903	5
5	407	3	542	2	949	2	138	3	175	2	313	3	547	3	773	2	1,320	2
6	1,726	11	2,019	8	3,745	9	552	13	714	10	1,266	11	2,321	12	2,744	7	5,065	9
All regions outside U.S.																		
Yes	2,550	17	3,331	13	5,881	14	979	24	1,434	19	2,413	21	3,226	17	4,559	12	7,785	14
Number of regions outside U.S.																		
0	12,537	83	22,753	87	35,290	86	3,175	76	6,044	81	9,219	79	16,000	83	32,311	88	48,311	86
1	1,245	8	1,785	7	3,030	7	515	12	844	11	1,359	12	1,566	8	2,485	7	4,051	7
2	576	4	709	3	1,285	3	214	5	293	4	507	4	710	4	990	3	1,700	3
3	316	2	419	2	735	2	118	3	153	2	271	2	399	2	513	1	912	2
4	183	1	207	1	390	1	56	1	75	1	131	1	228	1	265	1	493	1
5	75	0	78	0	153	0	29	1	25	0	54	0	110	1	105	0	215	0
≥6	155	1	78	0	186	0	34	1	25	0	59	1	140	1	112	0	252	0

Table A7. Characteristics of the Institutions in the Graduate School Choice Sets of Prospective Graduate Students by Hispanic Subgroup and Gender (U.S. Citizens), July 2016–June 2021

Variable	Mexican			Puerto Rican			Other Hispanic		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Percentage PGS who sent at least one GRE score report to a graduate institution with an IPEDS ID	82	81	81	80	80	80	79	79	79
Number of PGS who sent at least one GRE Score Report to a graduate institution with an IPEDS ID	13,409	23,284	36,693	3,664	6,665	10,329	16,909	32,613	49,522
Total number of GRE score reports	47,584	78,051	125,635	12,668	21,981	34,649	60,969	111,091	172,060
Median number of graduate institutions	3.55	3.35	3.42	3.46	3.30	3.35	3.61	3.41	3.47
Mean number of graduate institutions	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Minimum number of graduate institutions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum number of graduate institutions	40	51	51	35	32	35	37	55	55
Percentage with ≤ 4 prospective graduate institution choices	76	78	77	77	78	77	75	77	76
Percentage with 5–10 prospective graduate institution choices	21	19	20	20	19	19	21	20	20
Percentage with ≥ 11 prospective graduate institution choices	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one in-state institution (Y/N)	83	85	84	77	81	79	79	83	81
Percentage in-state institutions in choice set	77	78	78	74	78	77	75	78	77
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one out-of-state institution (Y/N)	52	49	50	56	50	52	55	49	51
Percentage out-of-state institutions in choice set	70	69	70	76	74	75	75	72	73
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one institution in U.S. Census division (Y/N)	88	89	89	86	89	88	86	90	89
Percentage institutions in U.S. Census division in choice set	79	81	80	79	82	81	78	82	80
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one institution outside their U.S. Census division but within their region (Y/N)	20	19	19	20	18	18	20	19	19
Percentage institutions outside U.S. Census division but within region in choice set	35	35	35	36	35	36	35	35	35
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one institution outside of their U.S. Census region (Y/N)	41	38	39	42	36	38	43	36	38
Percentage institutions outside U.S. Census region in choice set	58	56	57	60	58	59	60	56	58
Percentage PGS who may apply to their undergraduate institution (Y/N)	49	51	50	42	45	44	50	53	52
Percentage undergraduate institutions in choice set	59	59	59	58	60	60	59	60	60
Percentage PGS who may apply to regional flagship institution in state of residence (Y/N)	19	14	16	19	16	17	21	16	18

Variable	Mexican			Puerto Rican			Other Hispanic		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Percentage regional flagship institutions in state of residence in choice set	38	39	39	41	41	41	41	40	40
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one regional comprehensive institution in state of residence (Y/N)	35	42	40	25	31	29	26	33	31
Percentage regional comprehensive institutions in state of residence in choice set	21	26	24	14	19	18	15	20	18
Percentage PGS who may apply to the land grant institution in their state of residence (Y/N)	35	29	31	41	33	36	37	29	32
Percentage land grant institutions in their state of residence in choice set	43	45	44	46	49	48	43	44	44
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one public graduate institution (Y/N)	88	87	87	81	79	80	84	82	83
Percentage public graduate institutions in choice set	79	79	79	73	74	74	76	75	76
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one private nonprofit graduate institution (Y/N)	52	53	52	63	62	62	57	58	58
Percentage private nonprofit graduate institutions in choice set	56	57	56	62	64	63	61	62	62
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one private for-profit graduate institution (Y/N)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	7	6
Percentage private for-profit graduate institutions in choice set	29	31	30	31	34	33	29	29	29
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one graduate institution with at least 20,000 students (Y/N)	86	82	83	76	72	74	82	77	79
Percentage graduate institutions with at least 20,000 students in choice set	77	74	75	72	70	71	74	71	72
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one MSI graduate institution (Y/N)	63	65	65	45	49	47	53	58	56
Percentage MSI graduate institutions in choice set	61	63	63	54	56	55	57	61	60
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one AANAPISI graduate institution (Y/N)	35	35	35	19	22	21	24	25	25
Percentage AANAPISI graduate institutions in choice set	44	48	46	42	48	46	41	47	45
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one ANNH graduate institution (Y/N)	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Percentage ANNH graduate institutions in choice set	26	32	30	41	42	41	38	32	34
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one HSI graduate institution (Y/N)	55	58	57	35	39	37	44	50	48
Percentage HSI graduate institutions in choice set	61	64	63	54	56	56	58	62	60
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one NASNTI graduate institution (Y/N)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
Percentage NASNTI graduate institutions in choice set	40	39	40	31	47	39	40	35	37
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one PBI graduate institution (Y/N)	1	1	1	3	4	3	2	3	3
Percentage PBI graduate institutions in choice set	38	34	35	39	38	38	39	41	41
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one HBCU graduate institution (Y/N)	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	2
Percentage HBCU graduate institutions in choice set	29	31	30	36	34	34	31	30	31

Variable	Mexican			Puerto Rican			Other Hispanic		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one TCU graduate institution (Y/N)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage TCU graduate institutions in choice set									
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one single-sex college (Y/N)	2	4	4	1	2	1	2	4	3
Percentage single-sex colleges in choice set	24	32	31	21	25	24	21	30	28
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one men's college (Y/N)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage men's colleges in choice set	75		75				50	42	47
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one women's college (Y/N)	2	4	4	1	2	1	2	4	3
Percentage women's colleges in choice set	24	32	31	21	25	24	21	30	28
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one graduate institution with Carnegie doctoral classification (Y/N)	90	88	89	90	86	87	91	87	89
Percentage graduate institutions with Carnegie doctoral classification in choice set	87	83	84	89	86	87	89	85	86
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one graduate institution with Carnegie master's classification (Y/N)	27	33	31	25	33	30	23	31	28
Percentage graduate institutions with Carnegie master's classification in choice set	52	54	54	53	57	56	51	54	53
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one graduate institution with Carnegie classification special focus 4 year (Y/N)	17	21	19	15	17	16	15	21	19
Percentage graduate institutions with Carnegie classification special focus 4 year in choice set	43	43	43	40	40	40	41	41	41
Percentage PGS who may apply to at least one AAU member graduate institution (Y/N)	56	48	51	55	46	49	56	45	49
Percentage AAU member graduate institutions in choice set	67	61	63	64	57	60	66	57	61

Note. AANAPISI = Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–serving institution. ANNH = Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian–serving institution. AAU = American Association of Universities. BA = bachelor of arts. HBCU = historically Black college or university. HSI = Hispanic-serving institution. IPEDS = Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. MSI = minority-serving institution. N/A = not applicable. NASNTI = Native American–serving nontribal institution. PBI = predominantly Black institution. PGS = prospective graduate students. TCU = tribal college or university. Y/N = yes/no.

Notes

¹ In this report, unless otherwise noted when citing external sources, the term *Hispanic* refers to the Hispanic or Latino population.

² In 2022, the gender question was revised. *A Snapshot of the Individuals Who Took the GRE General Test July 2018–June 2023* (ETS, 2024) presents gender data using the revised gender question.

³ These race/ethnicity categories match those provided in *A Snapshot of the Individuals Who Took the GRE General Test July 2016–June 2021* (ETS, 2022).

⁴ For a more comprehensive analysis of the experiences of women PGS, refer to the fifth Pathways to Graduate School series report (Millett, 2025a).

⁵ On the BIQ, individuals were asked “What is your native language?” It is acknowledged that within the field of applied linguistics, using the term *first language* rather than *native language* would address concerns surrounding the “native speaker bias.”

⁶ The U.S. Census Bureau does not include Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories in any census region or division.

⁷ These analyses exclude PGS who resided in Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories. In the aggregate, the 119,853 Hispanic PGS with residential data lived primarily in the United States, with fewer than 2% residing in Puerto Rico. Of the 12,770 Puerto Rican PGS, 1,927 (15%) lived in Puerto Rico. Fewer than 1% of Mexican and other Hispanic PGS resided in Puerto Rico.

⁸ These analyses do not include baccalaureate institutions in the U.S. territories. When the three subgroups are aggregated, 1,084 of PGS attended a baccalaureate institution in Puerto Rico, and 71,157 attended a baccalaureate institution in the United States. For Puerto Rican PGS, 1,019 attended a baccalaureate institution in Puerto Rico, and 6,467 attended one in the United States.

⁹ This list is from July 2022. As of July 2023, 69 AAU member universities are in the United States.

¹⁰ Note that these regions do not align precisely with the U.S. Census divisions and regions presented in other report sections. These regions are from the BIQ. The Northeast region includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Mid-Atlantic region includes Washington, DC, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The South region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Midwest region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Southwest region includes Arizona, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The West region includes Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawai‘i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

¹¹ For Puerto Rican PGS, 797 (2%) of their choice sets included graduate programs in Puerto Rico, which were not included in the analyses. In the aggregate, Hispanic PGS’ choice sets included fewer than 1% of graduate programs outside the 50 states.

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