

# University of Pittsburgh: Setting Graduates on a Course to Thrive

The Gallup Report of Graduate Outcomes, 2018



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## Introduction

Typically, colleges and universities are evaluated by metrics that are easiest to measure — time to completion, graduation rates, and graduates' initial employment levels and salaries. Gallup's research goes beyond these traditional metrics to assess the degree to which graduates move on to meaningful lives and careers. It is through these important outcomes that colleges and universities can assess the holistic value they provide to their graduates.

In this third study examining University of Pittsburgh ("Pitt") graduate outcomes, Gallup surveyed 2006-2016 Pitt graduates from the Pittsburgh campus to assess how they fared in the critical years immediately following graduation as they launched into their adult lives. The analysis presented in this report is based on combined responses from data Gallup collected from the same cohort of Pitt graduates in two previous studies conducted in 2015 and 2016.

This study sought to understand how Pitt graduates compare with their peers in a variety of important areas: employment outcomes, engagement in their work and levels of well-being. In this report, Gallup also examines the outcomes of recent Pitt graduates from underserved populations, specifically first-generation college students.

Gallup compares recent University of Pittsburgh graduates from the Pittsburgh campus with college graduates nationally from the Gallup-Purdue Index and two select comparison groups from the national Gallup-Purdue Index database — college graduates from member institutions of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and a subset of AAU member graduates from public institutions. For direct comparability, comparison group samples only include graduates from the same years as those in the Pitt sample (2006-2016).



# Executive Summary

This University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) study compares 2006-2016 Pitt graduates from the Pittsburgh campus (n=8,535) with college graduates nationally (n=8,411), graduates of AAU member institutions (n=1,476) and AAU public institutions (n=1,100) from the same graduation years to determine how they fare in measures of employment, engagement, well-being and postgraduate degree attainment. The study also examines how first-generation college students (FGCS) who attended Pitt between 2006 and 2016 compare with peers from the same graduation years nationally and from AAU and AAU public institutions.

## 1 Recent Pitt graduates have favorable employment outcomes compared with all comparison groups.

- More Pitt graduates are employed full time for an employer (79%) than are college graduates nationally (71%), AAU graduates (73%) and AAU public institution graduates (73%).
- Fewer Pitt graduates are unemployed (2%) compared with college graduates nationally (5%), graduates from AAU (4%) and AAU public (4%) institutions.

## 2 Recent Pitt graduates are much more likely than their peers in all comparison groups to attain an advanced degree beyond their undergraduate education.

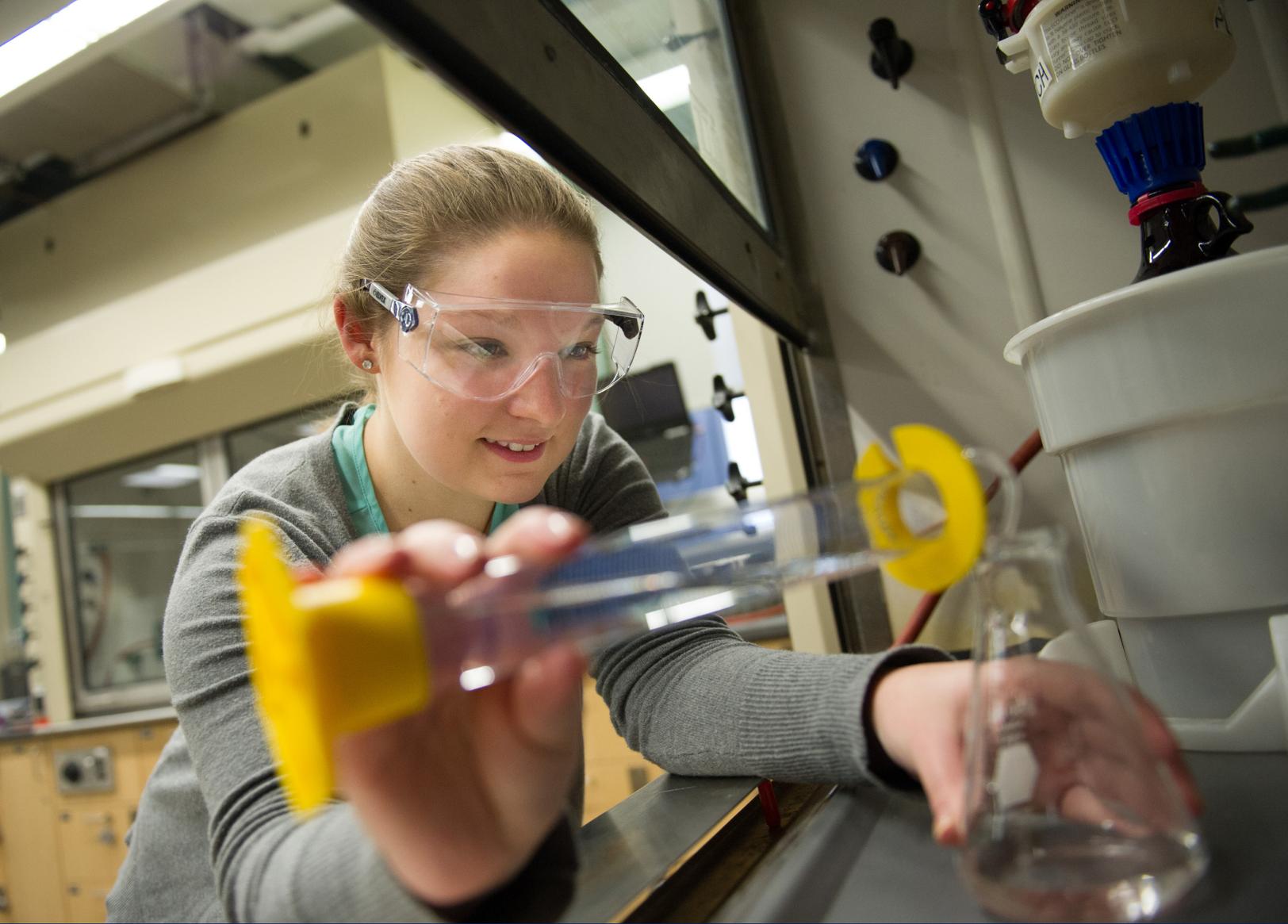
- Forty-one percent of recent Pitt graduates have earned an advanced degree, almost twice the national average (21%) and much higher than AAU graduates (25%) and those from AAU public institutions (24%).

## 3 Pitt graduates' well-being compares favorably with college graduates nationally and those from AAU and AAU public peer institutions.

- Recent graduates from Pitt are more likely to thrive in four or more elements of well-being (22%) than are U.S. college graduates (15%), AAU graduates (17%) and AAU public graduates (16%).
- Pitt graduates are more likely than college graduates nationally (8% vs. 5%, respectively) to be thriving in all five elements of well-being, and they outpace AAU and AAU public graduates in the elements of purpose, social and physical well-being.

## 4 First-generation Pitt graduates and Pitt graduates overall excel similarly when compared with their respective peer groups in their employment, educational attainment and well-being.

- Eighty percent of recent FGCS graduates from University of Pittsburgh are employed full time for an employer — a higher percentage than their peers nationally (71%), from AAU institutions (69%) and AAU publics (71%).
- Pitt's recent FGCS graduates are twice as likely to earn an advanced degree (38%) as their peers nationally (19%), those from AAU member institutions (19%) and AAU public institution graduates (18%).



79%

Compared to college graduates nationally (71%), more Pitt graduates (79%) are employed full time for an employer.

# Employment Outcomes

Incoming college students most commonly give two reasons that they are attending college: “to learn about things that interest me” and “to get a better job”<sup>1</sup> — and, by extension, a job in which they are truly engaged in their work. Therefore, if higher education fails to lead graduates to jobs where they are engaged and invested, it has not delivered on the principal expectations of their students and the families who support them.

Gallup is uniquely positioned to assess institutions on this outcome, measuring graduates on not only their employment but also the degree to which they are truly engaged and connected to their careers.

Recent Pitt graduates are more likely to be employed full time for an employer (79%) than are graduates in all comparison groups — college graduates nationally, AAU graduates and AAU public institution graduates (71%, 73% and 73%, respectively). Conversely, fewer Pitt graduates than all three peer comparison groups are self-employed, unemployed, employed part time but would like full time work, and employed part time and do not want full-time work.

**FIGURE 1**

**University of Pittsburgh Employment Outcomes vs. Comparison Groups**



Note: \*Differences between comparison groups and the Pitt sample are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

But just measuring employment outcomes tells only part of the story: Gallup also measures how “engaged” full-time workers are in their careers. This research is undergirded by decades of Gallup global research examining behaviors and attitudes of more than 30 million employees.

1 Pryor, J. H., Hurtado, S., Saenz, V. B., Santos, J. L., & Korn, W. S. (2006). The American freshman, forty year trends. Los Angeles: Cooperative Institutional Research Program, Higher Education Research Institute: <https://heri.ucla.edu/PDFs/40TrendsManuscript.pdf>

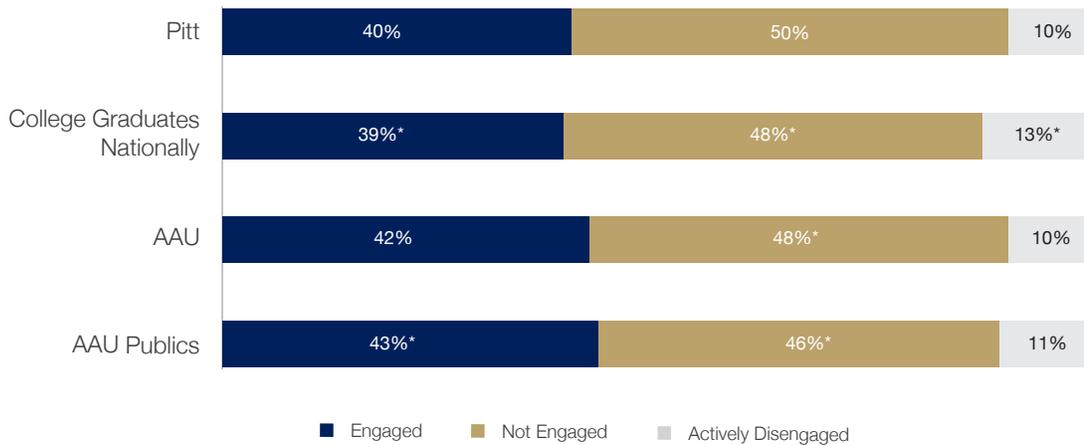
Workplace engagement signifies more than simply job satisfaction. It represents the degree to which an employee is intellectually and emotionally connected to their work and organizations. Engaged employees thrive in their work because they have the opportunity to do their best, they enjoy their work, and they are learning and thriving in their workplace.

Based on employees' responses to questions about these elements of their working lives, Gallup categorizes workers as engaged, not engaged or actively disengaged. Gallup's research demonstrates that engaged employees — only about a third of employees nationally — have higher levels of productivity, profitability, and satisfied customers, and lower rates of absenteeism, turnover and safety incidents.

Recent Pitt graduates' workplace engagement (40% engaged) is on par with college graduates nationally (39%) and AAU graduates (42%), yet trails graduates from AAU public institutions (43%). Fewer recent Pitt graduates than national peers are classified as actively disengaged in their work, while half of Pitt graduates (50%) are not engaged in their work — more than all three peer groups.

**FIGURE 2**

**Workplace Engagement Across Groups, Among Those Working Full Time for an Employer**



Note: \*Differences between comparison groups and the Pitt sample are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

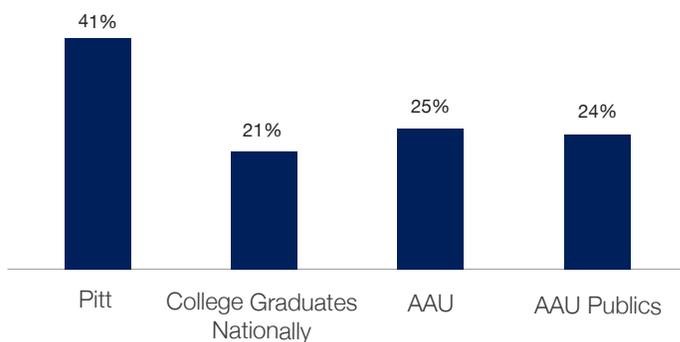
## Postgraduate Educational Attainment

In addition to favorable workplace and career outcomes, recent University of Pittsburgh graduates perform better than their peers with respect to their attainment of advanced educational degrees. Higher levels of education are associated with greater earnings over one's lifetime, and also elevated levels of well-being.<sup>2</sup>

Recent Pitt graduates are markedly more likely than their peers to attain an advanced degree beyond their undergraduate education. Forty-one percent of recent Pitt graduates have earned an advanced degree, almost twice the percentage for graduates nationally (21%) and much higher than AAU graduates (25%) and those from AAU public institutions (24%).

**FIGURE 3**

**Percentage of Graduates Completing Postgraduate Education**



<sup>2</sup> Economic and Social Research Council. (2014, July). The wellbeing effect of education: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/news-events-and-publications/evidence-briefings/the-wellbeing-effect-of-education/>



## Well-Being

Well-being is not simply a matter of being healthy, wealthy and happy. Well-being encompasses a variety of considerations that include one's social relationships, the extent of their involvement in their local community and their sense of purpose in life. Gallup's well-being research is grounded in decades of research examining measures of a life well-lived in countries and cultures globally.

The Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being 5 View measures five interrelated elements of well-being:

- **Purpose Well-Being:** Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- **Social Well-Being:** Having strong and supportive relationships and love in your life
- **Financial Well-Being:** Managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
- **Community Well-Being:** Liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community
- **Physical Well-Being:** Having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

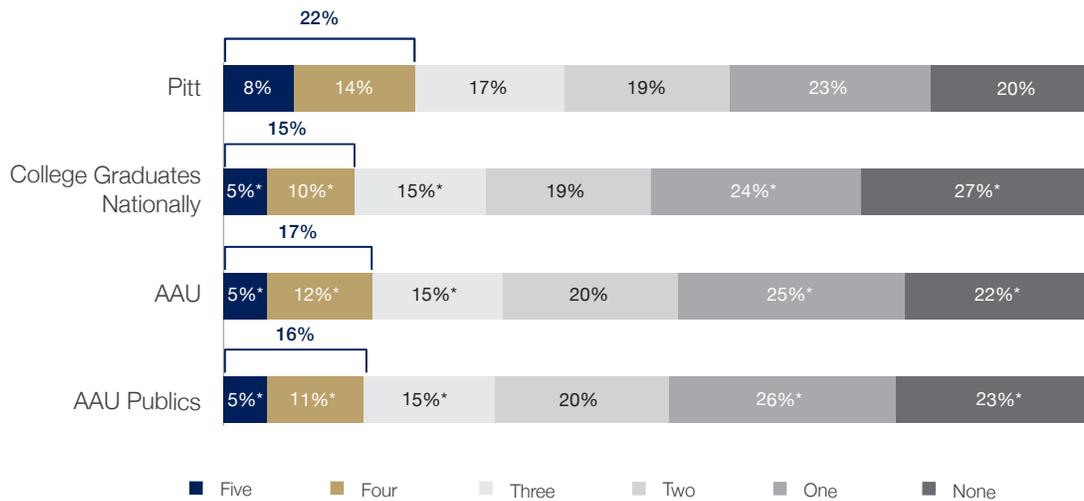
Gallup categorizes individuals as “thriving,” “struggling” or “suffering” in each element according to their responses to questions relating to each facet of well-being:

- **Thriving:** Well-being that is strong and consistent in a particular element
- **Struggling:** Well-being that is moderate or inconsistent in a particular element
- **Suffering:** Well-being that is low and inconsistent in a particular element



Pitt graduates' well-being compares favorably with college graduates nationally and those from AAU and AAU public peer institutions. Recent graduates from Pitt are more likely to thrive in four or more elements of well-being (22%) than are college graduates nationally (15%), AAU graduates (17%) and AAU public graduates (16%). Conversely, Pitt graduates are less likely than their peer groups to thrive in no elements of well-being (20% of Pitt graduates, 27% of graduates nationally, 22% of AAU graduates and 23% of AAU public graduates).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Percentage of Graduates Thriving in Any of Gallup's Five Well-Being Elements**

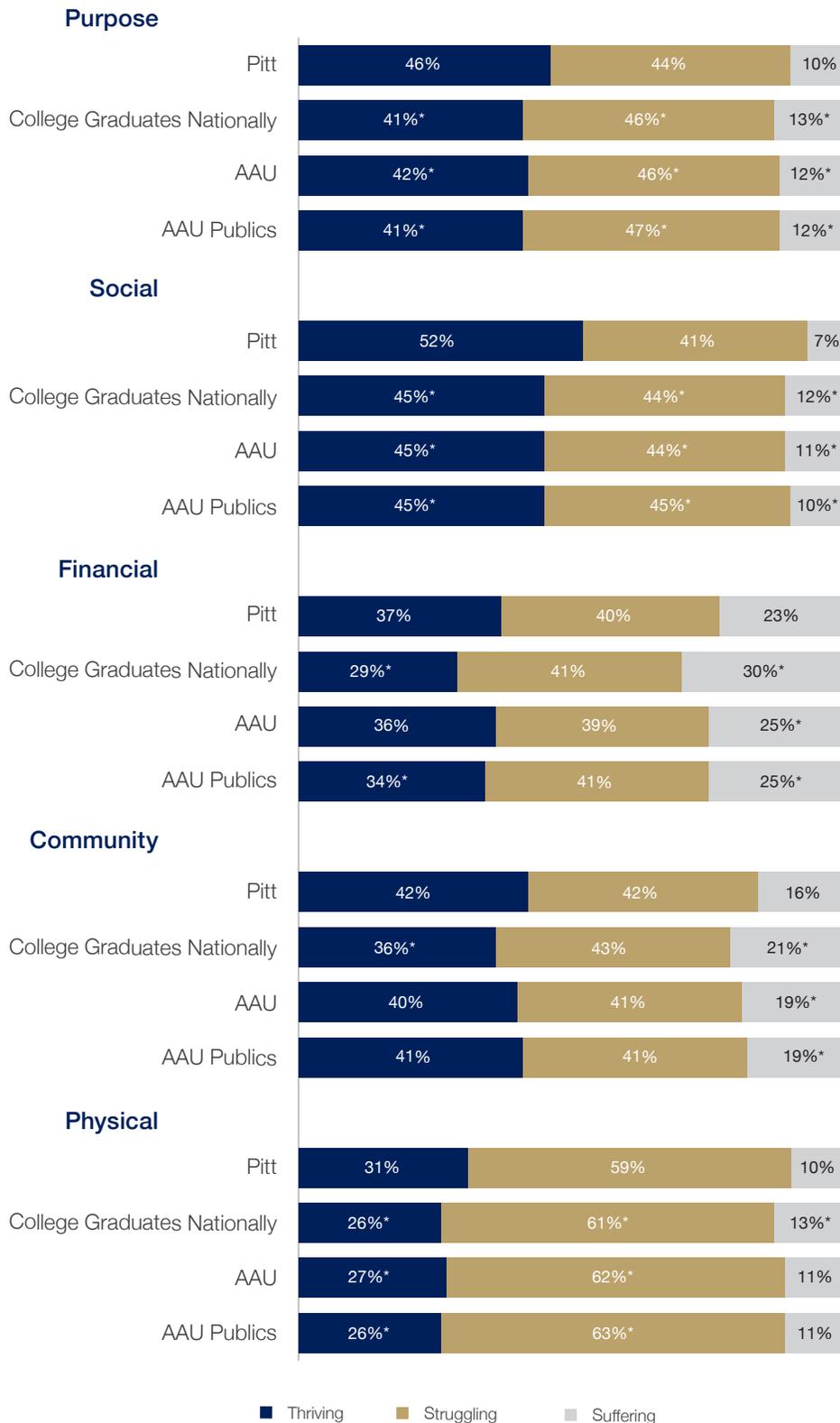


Note: \*Differences between comparison groups and the Pitt sample are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Recent Pitt graduates are also more likely than college graduates nationally to thrive in each of the individual five elements of well-being, and they generally fare better than or are on par with the AAU groups. Pitt graduates are more likely to thrive in their purpose, social and physical well-being when compared with all three peer groups.

Pitt graduates are more likely than college graduates nationally (8% vs. 5%, respectively) to be thriving in **all five elements** of well-being, and they outpace AAU and AAU public graduates in the elements of **purpose, social** and **physical well-being**.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Classification of Graduates in Each of Five Well-Being Elements**



Note: \*Differences between comparison groups and the Pitt sample are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.



41%

Forty-one percent of recent Pitt graduates have earned an advanced degree, almost **twice** the national average (21%).

# Examining Outcomes of First-Generation Pitt Graduates

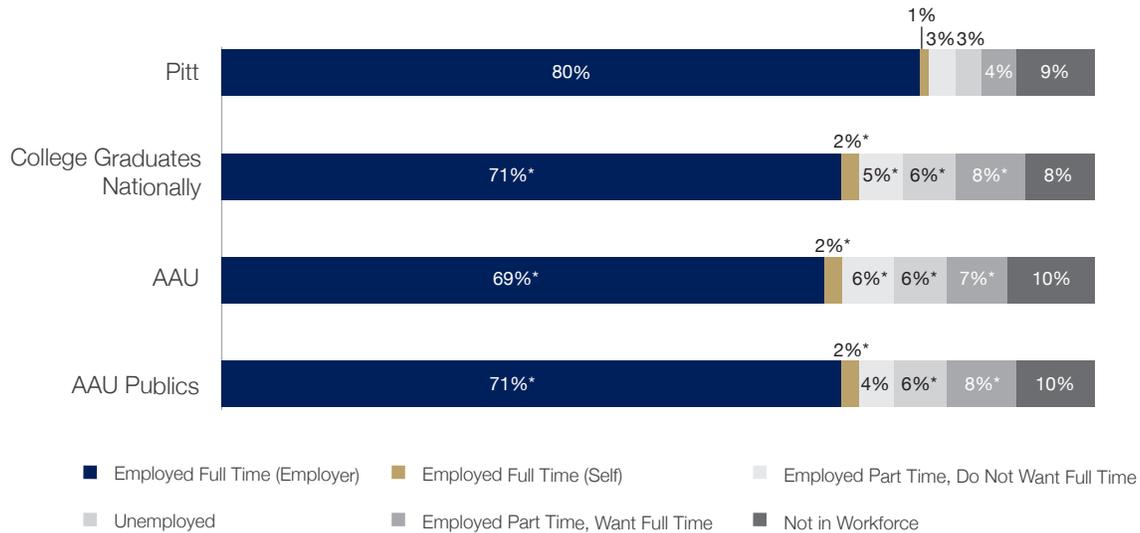
One of the major priorities among institutions of higher education has been to increase access to higher education in underserved and underprivileged populations. A robust research literature points to the specific concerns that first-generation college students (FGCS) — students from families in which neither parent has attained a college degree — face. This research elucidates differences in FGCS’s precollege experiences, challenges transitioning to college from high school, persistence and retention once in college, and postgraduation outcomes particularly with respect to postgraduate educational enrollment.<sup>3</sup>

The following analysis examines the performance of recent University of Pittsburgh FGCS graduates compared with recent FGCS graduates nationally and those from AAU and AAU public institutions.

## Employment

Recent FGCS graduates from University of Pittsburgh are more likely to be employed full time for an employer (80%) than are their peers nationally (71%), from AAU institutions (69%) and AAU publics (71%). Additionally, recent FGCS graduates from Pitt are less likely than their peers in all comparison groups to be self-employed, unemployed and to be employed part time but wanting full-time employment.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Employment Among FGCS Graduates**



Note: \*Differences between comparison groups and the Pitt sample are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

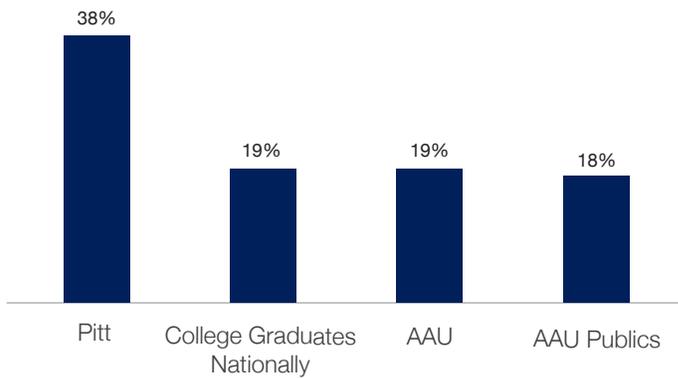
3 Pascarella, E., Pierson, C., Wolniak, G., Terenzini, P. (2004). First Generation College Students: Additional Evidence on College Experiences and Outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education*. 75(3): 249-284; Saenz, V., Hurtado, S., Barrera, D., Wolf, D., Yeung, F. (2007). *First in My Family: A profile of first generation college students at four-year institutions since 1971*. Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute; Ford, K. and Umbricht, M. (2016). *Persisting Gaps: Labor Market Outcomes and Numeracy Skill Levels of First Generation and Multi Generation College Graduates*. Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research.

### Postgraduate Educational Attainment

University of Pittsburgh's FGCS graduates are more likely than their peers to have earned an advanced degree. In fact, Pitt's recent FGCS graduates are twice as likely, at 38%, to have earned an advanced degree as their peers nationally (19%), those from AAU member institutions (19%) and graduates from AAU public institutions (18%).

**FIGURE 7**

**Postgraduate Degree Attainment Among Recent FGCS Graduates**



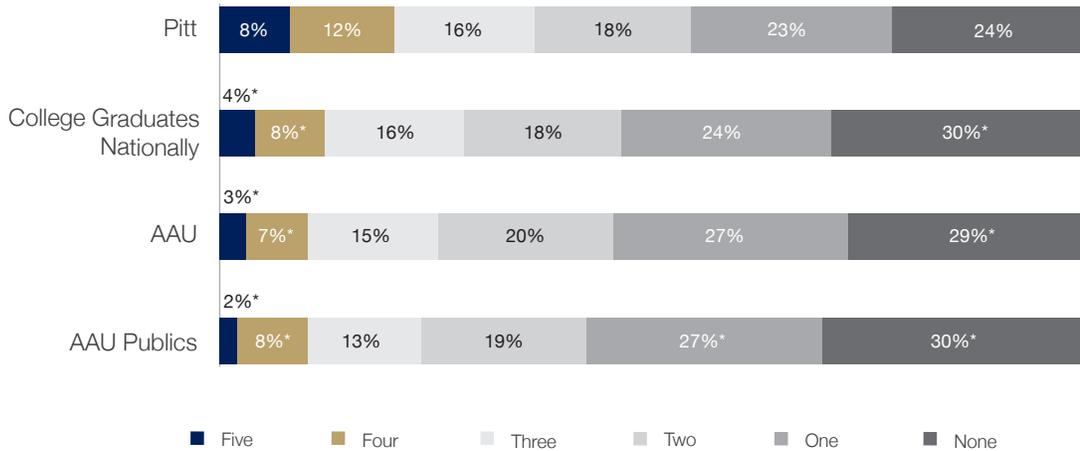
Pitt's recent FGCS graduates are **twice as likely**, at 38%, to have earned an advanced degree as their peers nationally (19%), those from AAU member institutions (19%) and graduates from AAU public institutions (18%).

## Well-Being

In addition to favorable employment and postgraduate educational outcomes compared with their peers, Pitt's recent FGCS graduates also fare better with respect to their overall well-being. Recent Pitt FGCS graduates are more likely to be classified as "thriving" in each of Gallup's five well-being elements: purpose, social, financial, community and physical, when compared with recent FGCS graduates nationally, from AAU member institutions and from AAU public institutions.

In accordance with these positive outcomes, Pitt's FGCS graduates are more likely than their comparison group peers to be thriving in four or more elements of well-being, and they are less likely to be thriving in no elements of well-being.

**FIGURE 8**  
**Percentage of FGCS Graduates Thriving in Well-Being Elements**



Note: \*Differences between comparison groups and the Pitt sample are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

These results demonstrate that the employment, well-being and postgraduate degree attainment outcomes of recent University of Pittsburgh graduates are overwhelmingly favorable compared with recent college graduates nationally and those from AAU and AAU public institutions. First-generation college students from Pitt fare similarly well when measured against their peers from these comparison groups.

## Methodology

Results for the University of Pittsburgh alumni study are based on web surveys conducted March 20-April 18, 2017, with a sample of 3,536 University of Pittsburgh undergraduate alumni from the Pittsburgh campus. Alumni were included in the study if University of Pittsburgh had an email address on file and they graduated between 2006 and 2016. The University of Pittsburgh provided a total of 41,285 alumni email addresses.

These data were combined with responses collected from the same cohort of Pitt graduates in two previous studies conducted in 2015 and 2016:

- Data collected in the 2015 Gallup-Purdue Index survey of Pitt graduates are based on web surveys conducted March 10-April 1, 2015, with a sample of 10,888 Pitt undergraduate alumni who graduated between 2006 and 2014.
- Data from the 2016 Gallup-Purdue Index survey of Pitt graduates are based on web surveys conducted February 29-March 28, 2016, with a sample of 3,832 undergraduate alumni who graduated between 2006 and 2015 from the Pittsburgh campus.

Results for the Gallup-Purdue Index, the national study used for comparison purposes, are based on web surveys conducted February 4-March 7, 2014; December 16, 2014-June 29, 2015; and August 22-October 11, 2016, with a random sample of 71,194 respondents with a bachelor's degree or higher, aged 18 and older, with internet access, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The national and other comparison groups in this report only include Gallup-Purdue Index respondents who graduated from college between 2006 and 2016.

The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index sample was compiled from two sources: the Gallup Panel and the Gallup Daily tracking survey. The 2015 and 2016 Gallup-Purdue Index samples were recruited via the Gallup Daily tracking survey. The Gallup Panel is a proprietary, probability-based longitudinal panel of U.S. adults who are selected using random-digit-dial (RDD) and address-based sampling methods. The Gallup Panel is not an opt-in panel. The Gallup Panel includes 60,000 individuals, and Panel members can be surveyed by phone, mail or web. Gallup Panel members with a college degree and access to the internet were invited to take the Gallup-Purdue Index survey online. The Gallup Daily tracking survey sample includes national adults with a minimum quota of 70% cellphone respondents and 30% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using RDD methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member had the most recent birthday. Gallup Daily tracking respondents with a college degree, who agreed to future contact, were invited to take the Gallup-Purdue Index survey online.

Gallup-Purdue Index interviews are conducted via the web, in English only. Samples are weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. The data are weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education and region. Demographic weighting targets are based on the most recent Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older U.S. bachelor's degree or higher population.

All reported margins of sampling error for the Gallup-Purdue Index of all college graduates include the computed design effects for weighting.

- For results based on the total sample of those with a bachelor's degree or higher (n=8,411), the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.5$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- For results based on employee engagement of those with a bachelor's degree or higher (n=6,959), the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.7$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- For results based on those with a bachelor's degree from AAU institutions (n=1,476), the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.6$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- For results based on employee engagement of those with a bachelor's degree from AAU institutions (n=1,227), the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 4.0$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- For results based on those with a bachelor's degree from AAU public institutions (n=1,100), the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 4.2$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- For results based on employee engagement of those with a bachelor's degree from AAU public institutions (n=924), the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 4.6$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.



## About the University of Pittsburgh

The University of Pittsburgh, a public research university, is a member of the by-invitation-only Association of American Universities. The Pittsburgh campus is home to 16 undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools and offers nearly 360 degree programs.

Pitt faculty have pioneered major scientific advances such as the Salk polio vaccine, multiple-organ transplantation, CPR, and breast cancer treatment. Pitt alumni have won the Nobel Peace Prize, the Nobel Prize in Medicine, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the National Medal of Science, Olympic gold medals, Academy Awards, and Super Bowl championships.

Pitt students come from all 50 states, three territories, the District of Columbia, and 107 countries and have a proven track record of earning such prestigious international and national honors as Rhodes, Marshall, Goldwater, and Churchill scholarships. Pitt educates the whole student through a unique Outside the Classroom Curriculum program that helps students develop holistically; undergraduate research opportunities; University Center for International Studies certificate programs; an Engineering Co-Op program; study abroad just about anywhere in the world; and more.

There are more than 600 student organizations ranging from arts and pre-professional organizations to groups with an international focus. Pitt student-athletes participate in Division I college athletics with 19 varsity sports teams and some of the most recognizable student-led athletic fan bases in the nation.

The Pittsburgh campus is located in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh, which has in recent years been cited by *The Economist*, *Forbes* magazine, and *Places Rated Almanac* as the most livable city in the U.S. Pitt offers students easy access to all the amenities the city has to offer, including internship and volunteer work venues, professional sports teams, an incredible variety of restaurants and shops, and cultural events through PITT ARTS, which provides educational encounters at Pittsburgh's world class symphony orchestra, concerts, ballet, opera, plays, exhibitions, independent film and jazz concerts.

## About Gallup

Gallup delivers forward-thinking research, analytics and advice to help leaders solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 75 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of the world's constituents, employees and customers than any other organization. Gallup consultants help private and public sector organizations boost organic growth through measurement tools, strategic advice and education. Gallup's 2,000 professionals deliver services at client organizations, through the web and in nearly 40 offices around the world.

## About Sharecare

Sharecare is an independent, global well-being company that provides comprehensive improvement solutions to increase performance and lower healthcare costs in its client populations. Dedicated to creating a healthier world one person at a time, Sharecare uses the science of well-being and behavior change to produce and measure well-being improvement for its customers. Sharecare provides personalized support to individuals to optimize each participant's health and productivity and to reduce health-related costs, and also advises leaders on how to maximize well-being across an organization.