

**RESEARCH BRIEF**

**Underrepresented Student Enrollment at NOVA  
Based on VCCS Underrepresented Population Groups: Fall 2016**

Introduction

This Research Brief summarizes underrepresented student enrollment statistics at NOVA in Fall 2016. The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has identified the following four underrepresented population groups (URP): (1) race/ethnic minority students, (2) Pell recipients, (3) first-generation students, and (4) students from Virginia localities in the lowest quintile of college degree attainment. Increasing service to underrepresented groups is part of NOVA’s mission to promote access and equality of opportunity.

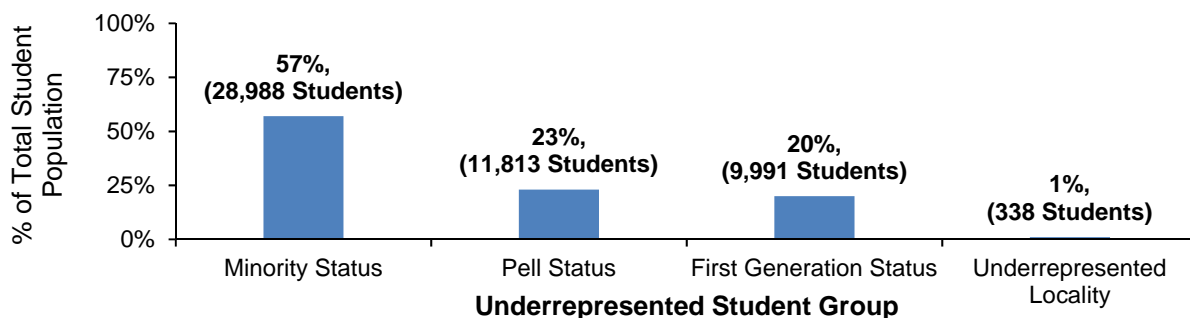
Underrepresented Students at NOVA

In Fall 2016, two-thirds of NOVA students were from underrepresented populations according to the VCCS’ definition (Table 1).

**Table 1. Underrepresented Student Enrollment at NOVA  
Based on VCCS URP Groups: Fall 2016**

Total Enrollment (N)	Underrepresented Students	
	#	%
50,835	33,651	66.2

**Figure 1. Underrepresented Students at NOVA by VCCS URP Group: Fall 2016**



Note: Non-resident aliens are excluded from each group as they are not considered underrepresented students. Groups contain duplicates, e.g., a student in the ‘Minority Status’ group may also be in the ‘Pell Status’ group (sum of groups does not total to 33,651).

## Identifying the Ways in Which Students Are Underrepresented

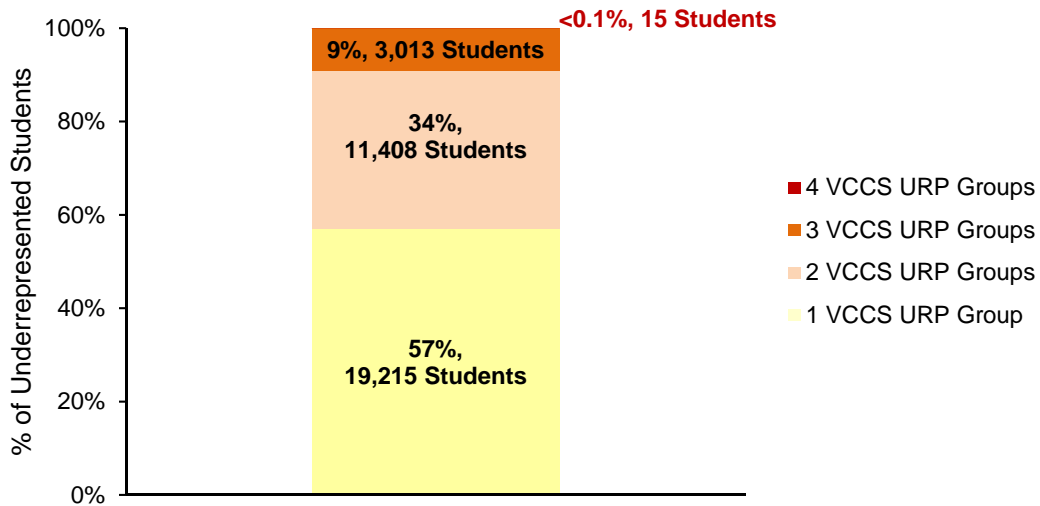
Most students at NOVA qualify as underrepresented because they belong to a minority race/ethnic group (Table 2). Indeed, NOVA is a majority-minority school, with about 60 percent of the student population belonging to a minority race/ethnic group. However, it may be more useful to examine underrepresented students in finer detail. For example, a student who belongs to a minority race/ethnic group and has parents who are high-income earners may not face the same barriers as a student who is of the same ethnicity but falls into a low socio-economic bracket and would be first in his or her family to attend college.

Table 2 and Figure 2 (next page) present underrepresented students at NOVA by the number of VCCS URP groups to which they belonged. In Fall 2016, most underrepresented students belonged to only one VCCS URP group. However, there were over 14,000 students who belonged to two or more VCCS URP groups. In particular, almost 3,000 students belonged to a minority race/ethnic group, were from a low-income household, and had parents who had not attained a college degree (i.e., were first-generation college students).

**Table 2. Underrepresented Students by Mutually Exclusive VCCS URP Groups: Fall 2016**

URP Groups (Groups are Mutually Exclusive)		Underrepresented Students		
		#	%	Cum. #
Students Belonging to <b>Four</b> VCCS URP Groups	Minority, Pell, First-Gen, and Location	15	<0.1%	--
	<b>Sub-total Four Groups</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>&lt;0.1%</b>	<b>15</b>
Students Belonging to <b>Three</b> VCCS URP Groups	Minority, Pell, and First-Gen	2,938	8.7%	--
	Minority, Pell, and Location	43	0.1%	--
	Minority, First-Gen, and Location	20	0.1%	--
	Pell, First-Gen, and Location	12	<0.1%	--
	<b>Sub-total Three Groups</b>	<b>3,013</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>3,028</b>
Students Belonging to <b>Two</b> VCCS URP Groups	Minority and Pell	6,119	18.2%	--
	Minority and First-Gen	4,529	13.5%	--
	Pell and First-Gen	635	1.9%	--
	Minority and Location	77	0.2%	--
	Pell and Location	24	0.1%	--
	First-Gen and Location	24	0.1%	--
	<b>Sub-total Two Groups</b>	<b>11,408</b>	<b>33.9%</b>	<b>14,436</b>
Students Belonging to <b>One</b> VCCS URP Group	Minority Only	15,247	45.3%	--
	Pell Only	2,027	6.0%	--
	First-Generation Only	1,818	5.4%	--
	Location Only	123	0.4%	--
	<b>Sub-total One Group</b>	<b>19,215</b>	<b>57.1%</b>	<b>33,651</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,651</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>--</b>	

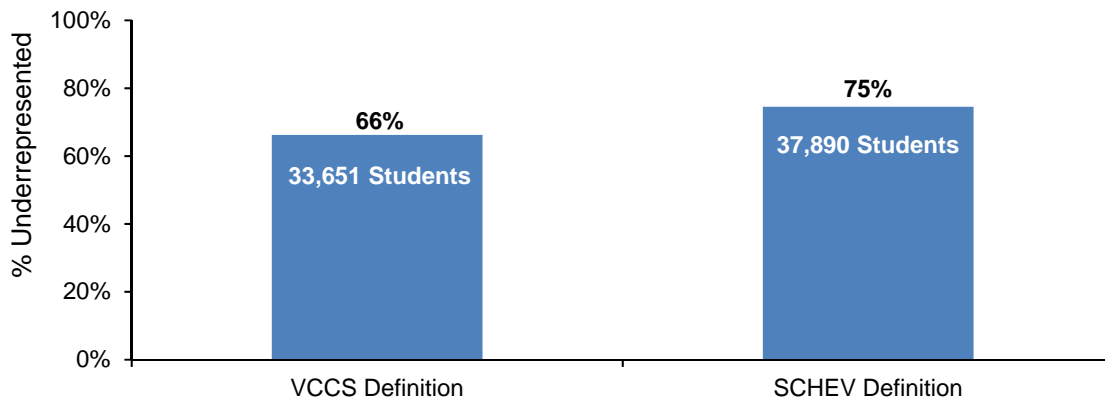
**Figure 2. Underrepresented Students by Number of VCCS URP Groups to Which Students Belonged: Fall 2016**



### Comparing the VCCS and SCHEV Definitions of Underrepresented Students

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) definition of underrepresented students differs from that of the VCCS. For example, SCHEV does not include first-generation students but includes non-traditional age students and uses a five-year period to identify Pell recipients (see Table 4, next page). Under SCHEV’s definition, in Fall 2016, 75 percent of NOVA students came from underrepresented populations<sup>1</sup>—a notably larger percentage than was identified by the VCCS.

**Figure 3. Proportion of Underrepresented Students at NOVA by VCCS and SCHEV Definitions: Fall 2016**



<sup>1</sup> Source: SCHEV  
 Statistics available at [http://research.schev.edu/enrollment/distUnder\\_reppop.asp](http://research.schev.edu/enrollment/distUnder_reppop.asp)

**Table 3. Underrepresented Population Groups: VCCS**

<b>Underrepresented Groups</b>	
<b>Minority Status</b>	Students are considered of minority status if their self-reported race/ethnicity on the online admissions application is anything other than White, Unknown, or Not Specified. Non-resident aliens are not counted as underrepresented populations (e.g. an international student who identifies as Asian would not count as belonging to an underrepresented population).
<b>Pell Status</b>	A student is considered to be of 'Pell status' if they received a Pell award during the 2016-17 academic year.
<b>First-Generation Status</b>	The student must have indicated on the online admissions application that <i>both</i> parents did not attend a post-secondary institution.
<b>Underrepresented Locality</b>	A student domiciled in localities identified by SCHEV and determined to be in the lowest quintile of associate and baccalaureate attainment rates*

Source: VCCS

**Table 4. Underrepresented Population Groups: SCHEV**

<b>Underrepresented Groups</b>	
<b>Minority Status</b>	Non-white US citizens and permanent residents.
<b>Pell Status</b>	Degree-recipients receiving Pell grants at any time during the five years prior to degree award.
<b>Non-traditional Status</b>	Students ages 25 or older at entry.
<b>Underrepresented Locality</b>	A student domiciled in localities identified by SCHEV and determined to be in the lowest quintile of associate and baccalaureate attainment rates*

Source: SCHEV

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\* Students domiciled in the following localities are classified as underrepresented: Lexington city, Harrisonburg city, Prince Edward County, Lee County, Alleghany County, Buena Vista city, Buckingham County, Prince George County, Greensville County, Page County, Washington County, Carroll County, Amherst County, Pittsylvania County, Norfolk city, Bristol city, Smyth County, Radford city, Warren County, Henry County, Lynchburg city, Franklin County, Craig County, Brunswick County, Russell County, Campbell County, and Charlottesville city.