

# GEN Z: CREATORS, COLLABORATORS, & INFLUENCERS

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FLORIDA PATHWAYS INSTITUTE, 4/12/2022  
DR. CLAIRE BRADY, VICE CHANCELLOR STUDENT AFFAIRS  
ANA G. MENDEZ UNIVERSITY

# TODAY'S SESSION

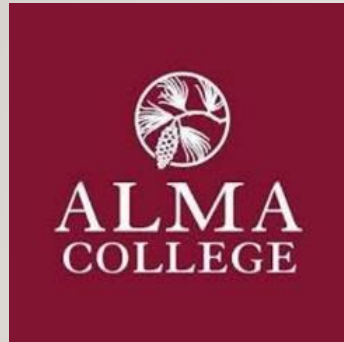
Understanding and appreciating the unique characteristics, mindset, and expectations of this population is essential for any higher education leader focused on student success, equity and inclusion, and strategic enrollment management.

Born between 1995-2010, Gen Z is climbing a longer educational ladder than previous generations and is on-track to be the most educated generation yet. However the pandemic has deeply impacted this generation, in many cases knocking lower-income and historically under-served students off their academic path.

This interactive session will examine this generation of learners and engage the participants in a dialogue focused on how we can adapt, tailor, and embrace this generation from admissions through to graduation, and beyond.



# MEET DR. CLAIRE BRADY, VICE CHANCELLOR STUDENT AFFAIRS AGM UNIVERSITY



# TALKIN' 'BOUT "MY GENERATION" —THE WHO

- No one generation is a homogeneous entity. Lived experiences within generational groups vary greatly.
- We are not aiming to paint an entire generation with a broad brush or to oversimplify the complexity of the human experience.
- It will be important to avoid devolving our discussion into stereotypes or generalizations. Some characteristics may not be true of you or of all people from that generational group.

*In the complex reality of our lives, our backgrounds make us who we are – and naturally make us different. Some of these differences are **individual**, some are **cultural**, and many are **generational**.*

*Understanding a person as a member of their generational cohort is an important and often instructive piece of knowledge, but ultimately, it's only a **piece of a much larger puzzle**.*

(Eric Peterson)

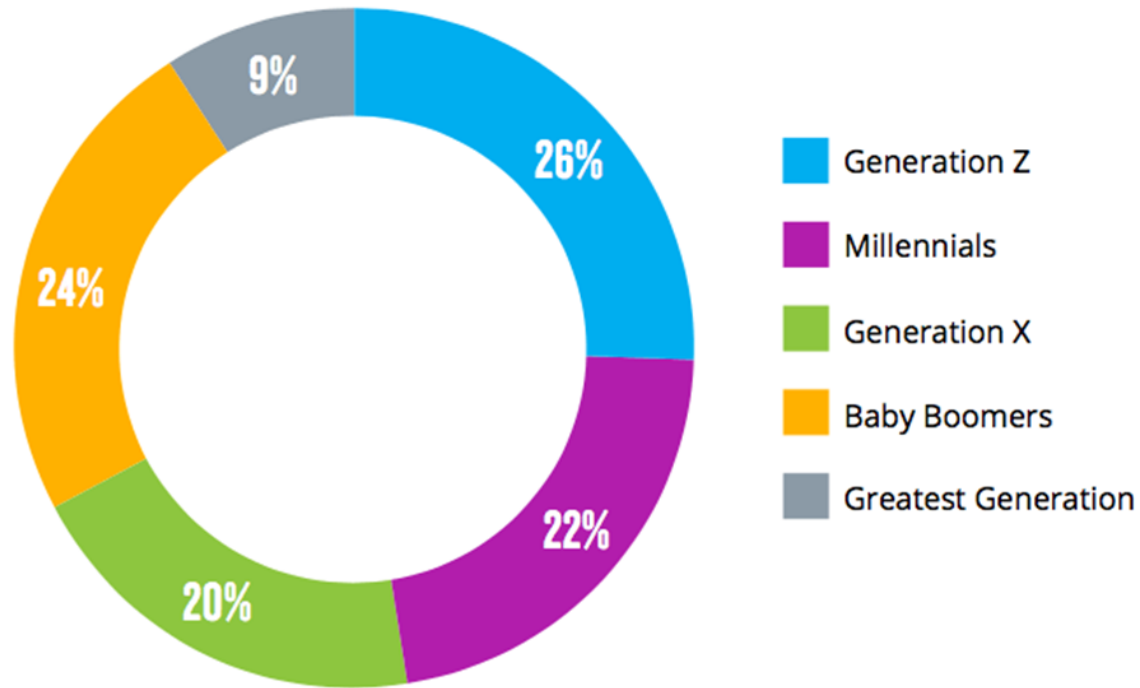
## What generation are you?

Boomer (1945-1964) Generation X (1965-1980)

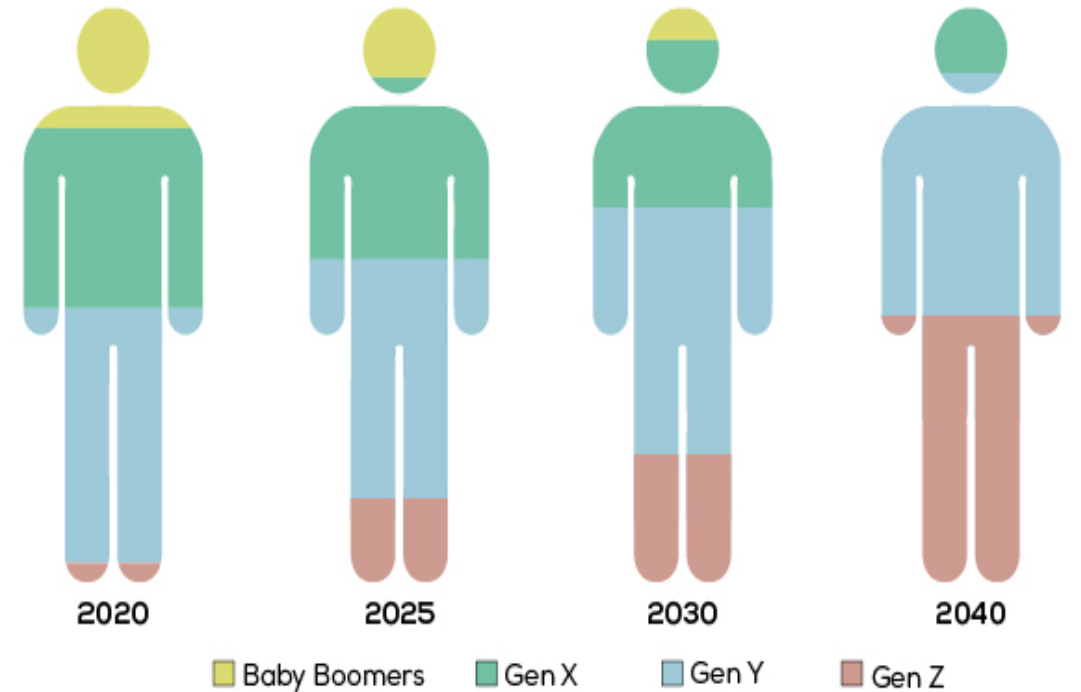
Generation Y (1981-1996), or Generation Z (1997-2012)?

# THE GENERATIONS

## GENERATIONAL COMPOSITION



## Workforce Percentages



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

# THE GENERATIONS

## **Boomers** Born 1945-1965.

*Adaptable, resourceful, hardworking, and pragmatic and motivated by position, perks, and prestige.*

Experienced the youth-driven counterculture of the 1960s and constitute a large and extended workforce.

They are now retiring in large numbers.

## **Generation X** Born 1965-1980

*Independent, resourceful, and self-sufficient. They value freedom and responsibility in the workplace.*

Many display a casual disdain for authority and structured work hours.

They dislike being micro-managed and embrace a hands-off management philosophy.

## **Generation Y aka “Millennials”** Born 1981-1996

*Family-oriented, willing to sacrifice career advancement for a better work/life balance, achievement-oriented, confident, and ambitious.*

Considered “the most diverse and eclectic in our nation’s history, as well as the most protected and observed.”

Gen Y/Millennial graduates encountered a depressed job market and high student loan debt.

## **Generation Z** Born 1997-2012

*Motivated by a desire to help others, causes they believe in, and pragmatism. They are considered open-minded and responsible.*





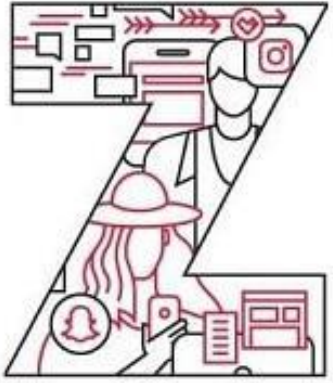









Represent ~75 million Americans

Are mobile natives; their “lens to the world is a small screen with multiple apps running simultaneously” (NACAC)

*Do you connect in any way with your generation’s description?*



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MILLENNIALS & GEN Z?

 GREW UP DURING AN <b>ECONOMIC BOOM</b>		 GREW UP DURING A <b>RECESSION</b>	
 TEND TO BE <b>IDEALISTIC</b>			 TEND TO BE <b>PRAGMATIC</b>
 FOCUSED ON HAVING <b>EXPERIENCES</b>			 FOCUSED ON <b>SAVING MONEY</b>
 <b>MOBILE PIONEERS</b>			 <b>MOBILE NATIVES</b>
 PREFER BRANDS THAT <b>SHARE THEIR VALUES</b>			 PREFER BRANDS THAT <b>FEEL AUTHENTIC</b>
 PREFER <b>FACEBOOK &amp; INSTAGRAM</b>			 PREFER <b>SNAPCHAT &amp; INSTAGRAM</b>
	<b>MILLENNIALS</b>	<b>GENERATION Z</b>	
	Born between about <b>1980</b> & <b>1996</b>	Born between about <b>1997</b> & <b>2010s</b>	
	<b>B</b> MOST WERE RAISED BY <b>BABY BOOMERS</b>	<b>X</b> MOST WERE RAISED BY <b>GEN XERS</b>	

# GEN Z CHARACTERISTICS

Internet has always been a part of their lives.

- 79% show signs of emotional distress when away from their devices.

Are “we-centric” and are generally motivated by a desire to help and please others – think crowdsourcing sites like *Kickstarter* and *GoFundMe*.



Do not intuitively seek out information, rather it “bubbles” up through push notifications.

- Grew up with a fast-forward and “like” button.
- Expect instant answers.
- May lack the digital literacy skills to be responsible media consumers.



# THE GEN Z MINDSET

- Describe themselves as “influential, loyal, compassionate, open-minded, and responsible” yet are not considered as social-justice minded as prior generations.
  - Want to advocate and work on behalf of something in which **they believe**.
  - Want to engage in service that has a lasting impact on **systematic and structural problems**.
  - View current **political systems as dysfunctional** and are consequently **disengaged from politics**.
- Greatest concerns are **education, employment, and racial equality**.
- Are more **comfortable with the language of mental health**, more willing to acknowledge psychological distress, learning disabilities, anxiety, and suicidal ideation than previous generations.
- Brand loyalty is not as common as with previous generations.

# THE DEMOGRAPHICS ARE CHANGING

## **Gen Z is racially and ethnically diverse.**

- Nearly 50% identify as non-white (vs 39% of Millennials & 30% of Gen X)
- 52% identify as white (vs 61% of Millennials)
- 25% identify as Hispanic (vs 18% of Millennials)
- 6% identify as Asian (vs 4% of Millennials)

## **Gen Z'ers are open to different gender identities.**

- 39% know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns (vs 25% of millennials & 16% of Gen X)
- 59% say forms should include options other than “man” or “woman” (vs 50% of Millennials)

## **Gen Z is attending college in higher numbers.**

- 59% of 18- to 20-year-old Gen Z'ers were in college in 2017 (vs 53% of similarly-aged Millennials in 2002)
- 55% of Hispanic and 54% of African-American Gen Z'ers were enrolled in college (vs 34% and 47% of Millennials)
- 66% of Gen Z women were enrolled in college (vs 57% of Millennial women)

# HIGHER EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS



- They are cost-conscious and value savvy. Grew up hearing stories about Millennials who were forced to move back home after college & with high debt.
- Want to know average starting salary, average indebtedness at graduation, and student loan default rates.
- Desire an education that prepares them for a meaningful career. Traditional roles/industries may not interest them as past generations.
- Will spend minimal effort searching for co-curricular opportunities, they expect them to be easy to find and to join.
- 72% want a more customized college experience where they design their own course of study or major.
- 79% would like to integrate their college experience with employer internships.

# GEN Z & COLLEGE DEBT

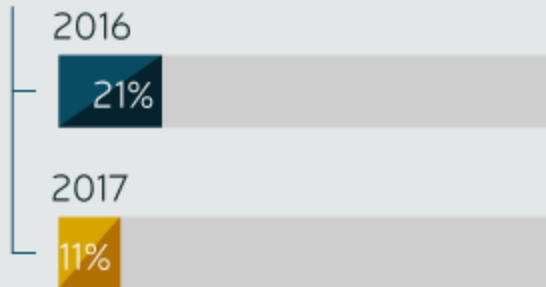
MILLENNIALS  
SAVE 15%  
MORE THAN  
GEN Z



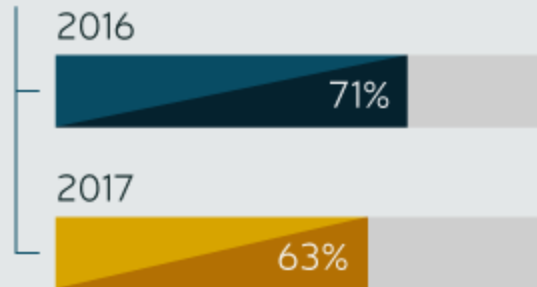
YET THEY  
HAVE 169%  
MORE  
DEBT

## Gen Zers fear taking on debt for education

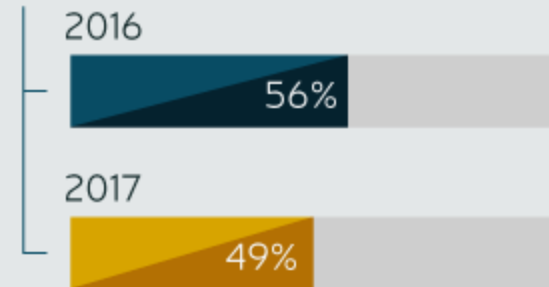
Would take  
student loans



Would possibly take  
on student loan debt



Are already planning on  
taking on student loan debt



# COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

**Email is out...** Gen Z prefers to *text* their college admissions concerns in frequent communication spurts instead of lengthy exchanges.

**Texting is in...** 70% of Gen Z college students text on average 12 times per class, and laptop users may spend two-thirds of their time on non-academic activities in class.

**Believe it or not** Gen Z students also enjoy face-to-face interactions and want to build relationships with college representatives. Authenticity and personalization matter- Gen Z students want transparent and honest interactions.

**Communication must be customized, conversational, *and* mobile optimized.** On social media, Generation Z prefers Instagram & Snapchat over other platforms. They use different platforms for different types of communication.



# COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

- Gen Z are natural multitaskers, and they like efficiency. They prefer consuming content in the fastest way possible—through visuals.
- Gen Z don't want to simply purchase from your brand—they want to be part of what you stand for. This is why the authenticity plays a big role in their purchasing decisions.
- 52% of Gen Z are highly likely to get a product or service if recommended by their favorite influencer. (The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2020)
- 71% of Gen Z consume over 3.4 hours of online videos daily. (CNBC, 2019)
- 91% of Gen Z prefer seeing visual content instead of traditional marketing formats. (Visual Communication)
- Gen Z respect and prefer brands that support humanitarian and social causes such as ending hunger (50%), stopping human trafficking (50%), ending poverty and homelessness (51%), and racial equality (51%). (The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2020)
- 79% of Gen Z trust companies that do not photoshop their ads, while 84% trust companies that use actual customers in their ads. (Adage)
- 67% of Gen Z find seeing real people in ads more appealing. Only 37% said they prefer seeing celebrities in ads. (Forbes)



# IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON GEN Z

- 50% of the oldest Gen Z population in the United States (18-23 years old) have been laid off from their jobs or received reduced pay due to the pandemic. (Pew Research Center, 2020)
- 30% of the older Gen Z (18-24) years old are stressed about the financial difficulties brought on by the pandemic. (The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2020)
- Since the pandemic started, 46% of older Gen Z have loaned money to a family member or a friend. (The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2020)
- 56% of Gen Z said that the pandemic has affected their social life. (Gen Z Planet, 2020)
- 36% of Gen Z said their future career plans are affected by COVID-19 (Gen Z Planet, 2020)
- 51% of Gen Z teens (13-17 years old) reported that the pandemic has made planning for their future seem impossible; 67% of Gen Z adults feel the same way. (APA, 2020)
- 47% of Gen Z admitted that the COVID-19 outbreak affected their family's finances. (Gen Z Planet, 2020)
- 47% of Gen Z stated that the pandemic has affected their future education plans; 36% said their future career plans are affected by COVID-19 (Gen Z Planet, 2020)



# GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What stood out to you about Gen Z? What surprised you most?
2. How does your own generation impact your worldview & how you serve students?
3. Gen Z prefer communication that is “customized, conversational, and mobile optimized.” What could you do to alter your communication methods to match these preferences?
4. How does this generational information support and inform you Guided Pathways work?
5. How can we collectively adapt, tailor, and embrace this generation from admissions through to graduation, and beyond?
6. How to we engage with Gen Z and not disengage from our non-traditional students?





# ONLINE RESOURCES

[www.visioncritical.com/blog/generation-z-infographics](http://www.visioncritical.com/blog/generation-z-infographics)

<https://eab.com/insights/daily-briefing/strategy/9-fast-facts-about-your-generation-z-students/>

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=jete>

<https://edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2018/10/meeting-educational-demands-generation-z>

<https://capturehighered.com/higher-ed/higher-ed-branding-gen-z-friendly/>

[www.nacacnet.org/news--publications/journal-of-college-admission/instant-generation/](http://www.nacacnet.org/news--publications/journal-of-college-admission/instant-generation/)

[www.altitudeinc.com/gen-z-the-future-of-higher-education/](http://www.altitudeinc.com/gen-z-the-future-of-higher-education/)

[www.readyeducation.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-understanding-gen-z-students](http://www.readyeducation.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-understanding-gen-z-students)

[www.businessinsider.com/gen-z-2020-voting-trends-2019-8](http://www.businessinsider.com/gen-z-2020-voting-trends-2019-8)

[www.businessinsider.com/gen-z-is-smartphone-generation-2019-7](http://www.businessinsider.com/gen-z-is-smartphone-generation-2019-7)

[www.businessinsider.com/gen-zs-habits-different-from-millennials-2018-6](http://www.businessinsider.com/gen-zs-habits-different-from-millennials-2018-6)

[www.chegg.com/wp-content/uploads/chegg-stateofthestudent\\_2019.pdf](http://www.chegg.com/wp-content/uploads/chegg-stateofthestudent_2019.pdf)

[www.insidehighered.com/blogs/higher-ed-gamma/are-colleges-ready-generation-z](http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/higher-ed-gamma/are-colleges-ready-generation-z)

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