

# **Ready or Not, Here They Come: Kentucky's New Undergraduates**

## **Five Realities that Kentucky Must Address to Become a State Educated for the Future**

- 1. Population projections over the next 43 years, between 2000 and 2050, indicate that only 10 percent of world population growth will be ages 25 and under, and 65 percent of the world population growth will be ages 45 and above.**  
**Population growth is now due to longevity increases, not fertility increases.** Will lifelong learning, retooling, and retraining replace one-time learning and a job that lasts for a lifetime, not just in Kentucky, not just in the developed world, but across the world?
- 2. In the United States, 36 states have fertility rates below the replacement level of 2.1 children per family, one (1) child for each parent and .1 for infant mortality. Every state east of the Mississippi River, except Georgia at 2.12, have a total fertility rate below replacement level; Kentucky has a fertility rate of 1.95. Kentucky is among the least likely states to have children.** Kentucky's efforts to increase its population with bachelor's degrees and above to the national average is not achievable by just educating the traditional, college-age population, ages 18 to 24. This can only be achieved by reaching out to nontraditional students, ages 25 and above, including those in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who may run out of money before they run out of life unless they re-educate or re-tool themselves.
- 3. Nontraditional students may move along the educational pipeline from getting their GED, taking vocational or technical courses, getting certificates, getting their associate degrees, or getting bachelor's degrees and advanced degrees.**  
Education must be presented as lifelong in nature in Kentucky with programs across the state that offer our citizens to continue to upgrade their skills and education levels over their lifetime.
- 4. The United States and Kentucky are both becoming more diverse with all growth in the United States under age 45 being Asian, Black, or Hispanic. Kentucky, while not as diverse as the United States, is also becoming more diverse.** Kentucky needs to ensure its minority populations have the opportunity to complete high school and pursue postsecondary education as a moral obligation but also as a reality to meet the needs of a workforce requiring an educated and skilled population.
- 5. The United States and Kentucky will both experience population decline and an aging population without supporting immigration and educational opportunities for the foreign immigrant population.** The United States and Kentucky must see the value of welcoming an immigrant population and making every effort to provide educational opportunities these new arrivals will need.