



# MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT TOPS

Updated 10-5-2017

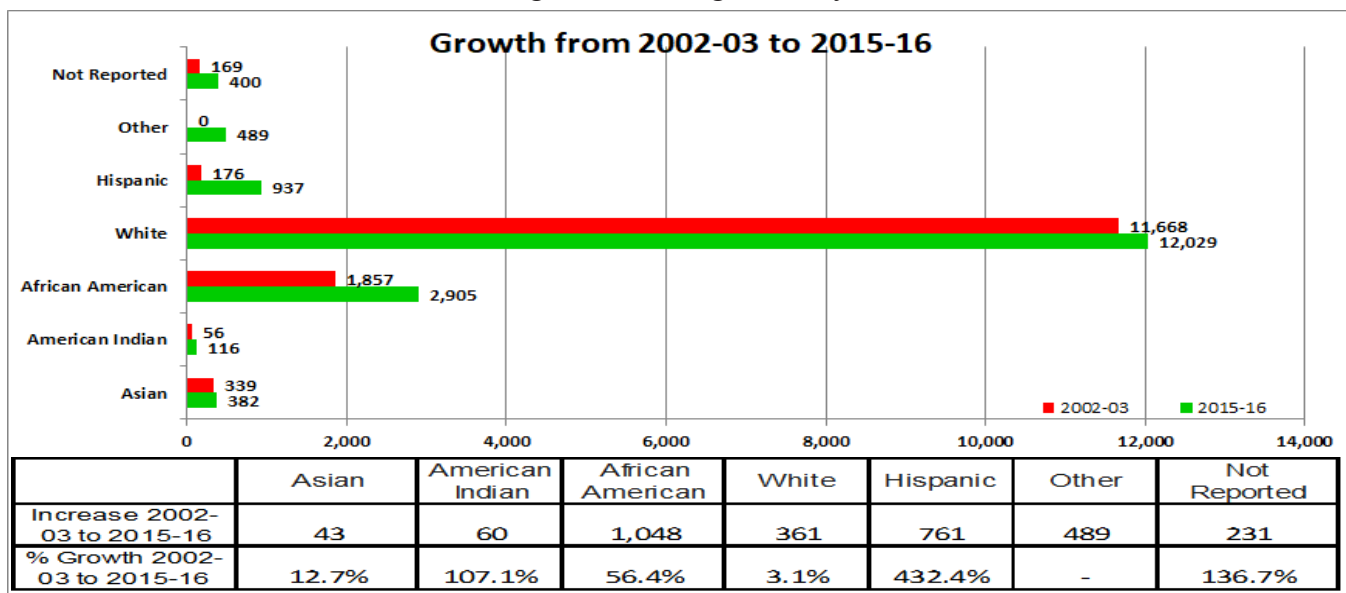
**Perception:** Most TOPS students lose their award during the first year of college.

**Truth:** The number of students losing their TOPS Award during the first year of college has decreased from 41% in the 2004-2005 academic year to 16.2% in the 2016-2017 academic year.

TOTAL TOPS RECIPIENTS FIRST PAID IN 2016-17	17,581
FIRST PAID RECIPIENTS THAT WERE CANCELLED	2,841
PERCENTAGE LOSING AWARD IN FIRST YEAR PAID	16.2%

**Perception:** TOPS awards do not benefit minorities.

**Truth:** The number of minorities receiving TOPS has significantly increased over time.



**Perception:** TOPS covers all costs of attending college.

**Truth:** ACT 18 of the 2016 Louisiana Legislature decoupled TOPS from tuition and set the “fully funded” amount going forward as the amount of tuition charged by the institution for the 2016-17 Academic Year. Students still have to pay all other costs of attendance (COA).

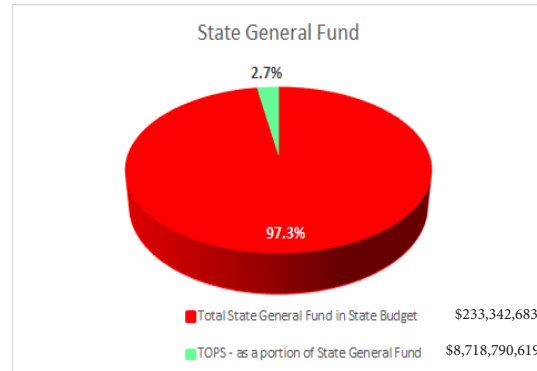
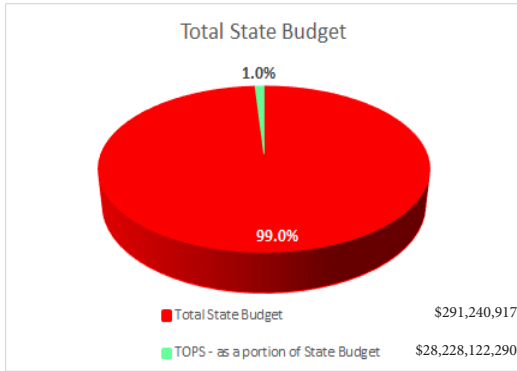
**Perception:** TOPS awards are disproportionately awarded to wealthy students.

**Truth:** Overall from 2002-03 through 2015-16, TOPS OPH recipients were relatively equally spread across income ranges. The recent trend of more higher income students accepting TOPS awards indicates the goal of providing incentives for LA graduates to pursue postsecondary education in this state is working.

Parental Income Range	Did not Report	Less than \$0	Between \$0 & \$50K	Between \$50K & \$100K	Over \$100K
Percentage of Total 2002-03 thru 2015-16	6.03%	0.23%	31.62%	30.79%	31.32%

**Perception:** TOPS consumes a large percentage of the State Budget.

**Truth:** For FY 2017-18 TOPS is equal to 1.0% of the total State Budget. For FY2017-18 TOPS is equal to 2.7% of the total State General Fund in the State Budget.

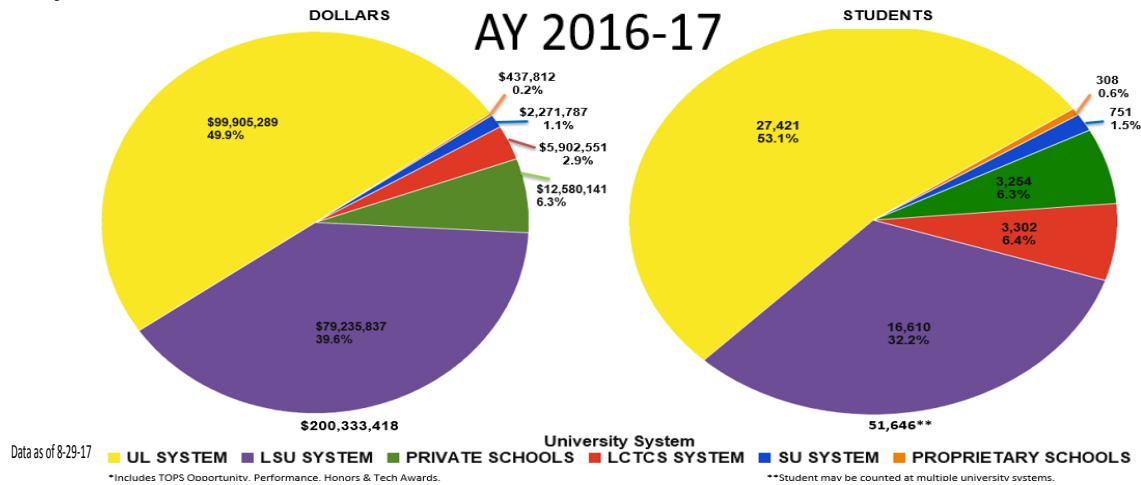


**Perception:** TOPS expenditures are growing at an astronomical rate.

**Truth:** The projected increase in TOPS from 2017-18 to 2018-19 is \$1,544,711 or 0.6%. Minimal growth is projected for TOPS due to increased projection of student count.

**Perception:** Only LSU students benefit from TOPS.

**Truth:** Every public higher education institution in the state has TOPS students, and the University of Louisiana system has the most TOPS students.



**Perception:** TOPS students are just mediocre/average students.

**Truth:** 2015-16 High School Graduates who became TOPS OPH recipients had an average ACT of 24 (Statewide average =19.5) and an average HS GPA of 3.38 on the TOPS Core Curriculum. The TOPS Core Curriculum is a rigorous set of requirements: 4 units of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, 2 units of Foreign Language and 1 unit of Fine Arts. TOPS encourages students to pursue AP, IB, and Dual Enrollment courses by grading these courses using a 5 point scale.

**Perception:** Needy students don't get TOPS

**Truth:** Of the 24,526 TOPS eligible students from HS Grad Year 2015-16, 11,359 or 46.3% were Pell eligible. Of the 24,830 GO Grant recipients for Academic Year 2016-17, 6,280 or 25.3% were also TOPS recipients.