Section 3

Student Effort and Educational Progress

Contents

Section 3: Web Site Contents

This List of Indicators includes all the indicators in Section 3 that appear on *The Condition of Education* web site (*http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe*), drawn from the 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 print volumes. The list is organized by subject area. The indicator numbers and the years in which the indicators were published are not necessarily sequential.

Introduction: Student Effort and Educational Progress

The indicators in this section focus on the effort students put into their studies, their progress through the educational pipeline, and their eventual attainment. Particular attention is paid to how various subgroups in the population proceed through school to different levels of educational attainment and what factors contribute to their success along the way.

The effort students put into their studies affects their performance and their access to and success at the next level. Indicators of student effort include how often students are absent from school, how interested they are in their schoolwork, whether they try to do their best, whether they complete their assignments, and how much time they spend on homework and other activities such as work or watching television.

Early school problems can accumulate and may lead eventually to dropping out of school, which has long-term negative consequences. Thus, the indicators in this section track students' progress through elementary and secondary education up to and including high school completion, showing differences by sex, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and urbanicity.

Issues of access, persistence, and attainment have been predominant concerns in postsecondary education. The transition to postsecondary education and persistence are monitored by examining who prepares for college, who enrolls, when and where they enroll, and what factors affect the likelihood of enrolling and staying enrolled. Overall educational attainment levels in the population over time provide an indicator of the success of various population subgroups.

The indicators in this section focus largely on postsecondary persistence and progress, taking advantage of recently released data on these topics. Recent data on high school dropouts and immediate transition to college are also presented. The web version of *The Condition of Education* contains additional indicators on other aspects of student effort and academic progress. These indicators are listed on the facing page and are available at *http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/list/i3.asp*.

Elementary/Secondary Persistence and Progress

Status Dropout Rates, by Race/Ethnicity

Since 1972, status dropout rates for Whites and Blacks ages 16–24 have declined; rates for Hispanics have not decreased and remain higher than those for other racial/ethnic groups.

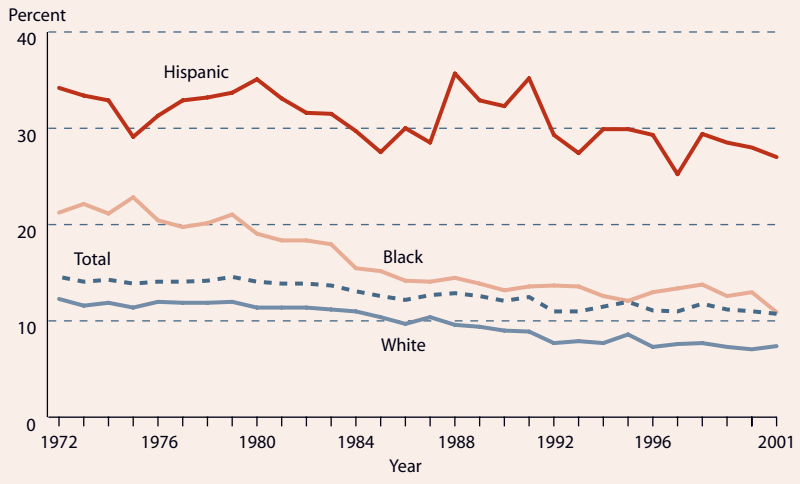
Dropouts from high school are more likely to be unemployed and earn less when they are employed than those who complete high school (NCES 2002–114). In addition, high school dropouts are more likely to receive public assistance than high school graduates who do not go to college (NCES 98–013, *indicator 34*).

The status dropout rate represents the percentage of an age group that is not enrolled in school and has not earned a high school credential (i.e., diploma or equivalent, such as a GED). According to this measure, 11 percent of 16- to 24-year-olds were out of school without a high school credential in 2001. Although the status dropout rate declined for young adults as a group between the early 1970s and 2001, it remained fairly stable from 1992 to 2001.

Racial/ethnic differences exist in the status dropout rates and in the changes in the rates over time. Each year between 1972 and 2001, the status dropout rate was lowest for Whites and highest for Hispanics (see supplemental table 17-1). Between 1972 and 2001, the status dropout rates for White and Black young adults declined, while the rate for Hispanics remained relatively constant. The gap between Blacks and Whites narrowed during the 1970s and 1980s, but not in the period since then.

Greater dropout rates among Hispanic immigrants partly account for the persistently high dropout rates for all Hispanic young adults. Among Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds who were born outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the status dropout rate of 43 percent in 2001 was more than double the rates for first- or later-generation Hispanic young adults born in the United States (15 percent and 14 percent, respectively). Nevertheless, Hispanic young adults born in the United States are more likely to be high school dropouts than their peers of other race/ethnicities (see supplemental table 17-2).

STATUS DROPOUTS: Dropout rates of 16- to 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: October 1972–2001



NOTE: Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indians or Alaska Natives and Asians or Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately. The erratic nature of the Hispanic status rates reflects, in part, the historically small sample size of Hispanics. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1972–2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 2

Supplemental Tables 17-1, 17-2

NCES 98–013

NCES 2002–114

Transition to College

Immediate Transition to College

Since 1983, the gap between Blacks and Whites in their immediate college enrollment rate has been reduced, but during the 1980s and 1990s the gap between Hispanics and Whites has widened.

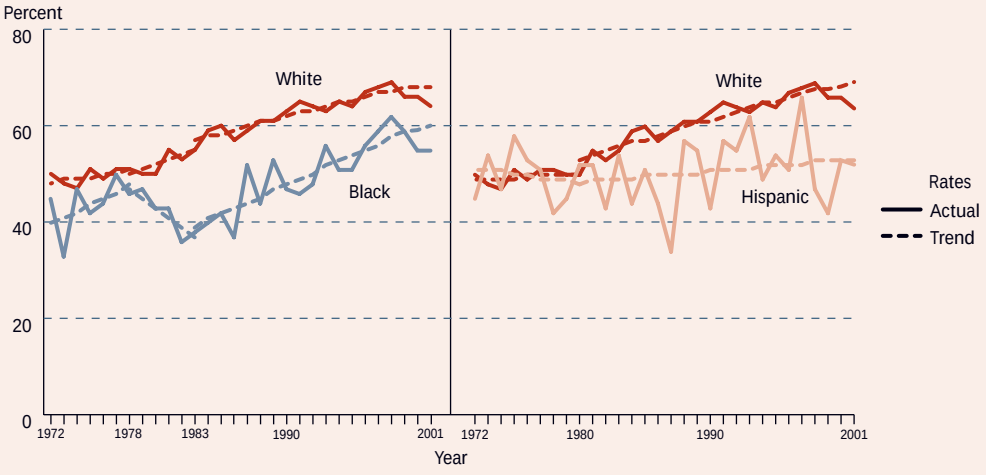
The percentage of high school completers who enroll in college in the fall immediately after high school reflects the accessibility of higher education and the value high school completers place on college compared with other pursuits. Overall, immediate college enrollment rates of high school completers increased from 49 to 62 percent between 1972 and 2001 (see supplemental table 18-1).

Immediate enrollment rates for White high school completers increased between 1972 and 2001, from 50 to 64 percent. Among Black high school completers, immediate enrollment rates remained fairly constant between 1972 and 1978, decreased between 1978 and 1983, and then increased between 1983 and 2001, from 38 to 55 percent. Since 1983, immediate enrollment rates for Blacks have increased faster than those for Whites, reducing the gap between the two groups. For Hispanic high school completers, immediate transition rates remained relatively constant between 1972 and 2001. Thus, while White rates rose during the 1980s and 1990s, stagnant Hispanic rates during this period resulted in the gap increasing between Hispanic and White rates.

From 1972 to 2001, immediate enrollment rates of female high school completers increased faster than those of male completers. Much of the growth in immediate college enrollment rates between 1984 and 2001 was due to increases in the rates of females at 4-year institutions. In this period, the rate at which females enrolled at 4-year institutions increased faster than that of males at 4-year institutions and both males and females at 2-year institutions (see supplemental table 18-2).

In each year between 1990 and 2001, there was a gap between students from high- and low-income families in their immediate enrollment rates. Likewise, completers whose parents had attained a bachelor's degree or higher were more likely than those with parents who had attained less education to enter college immediately after high school graduation for each year between 1990 and 2001. There was no evidence that these gaps by parental education narrowed over this time period (see supplemental tables 18-1 and 18-3).

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES: Immediate enrollment in postsecondary education, by race/ethnicity: October 1972–2001



NOTE: Includes those ages 16–24 completing high school in a given year. Actual values are 1-year averages calculated from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The trend values show the linear trend of these average values over the time periods shown. In 1994, the survey instrument for the CPS was changed and weights were adjusted. See *supplemental note 2* for further discussion. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified. The erratic nature of the Hispanic rate reflects, in part, the small sample size of Hispanics.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1972–2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 2

Supplemental Tables 18-1, 18-2, 18-3

Postsecondary Persistence and Progress

Transfers From Community Colleges to 4-Year Institutions

One-half of the undergraduates who start at a public 2-year institution with the intention of obtaining a bachelor's degree and about one-fourth of those who start with an associate's degree goal transfer to a 4-year institution within 6 years.

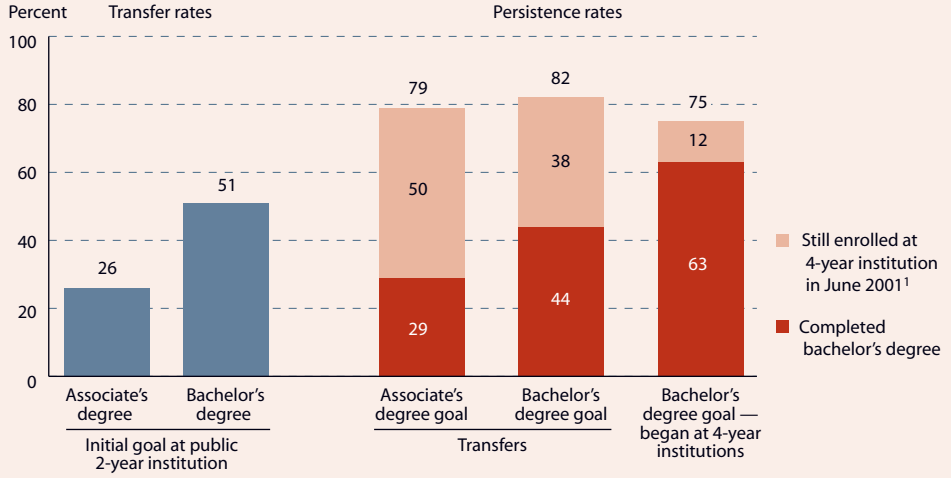
Community colleges offer courses for credit that students can transfer to a 4-year institution, with or without first completing an associate's degree. Many states and institutions have developed articulation policies to facilitate such transfers (Wellman 2002).

Students who start their postsecondary education at community colleges have diverse degree goals. About one-fourth of the students who began at a public 2-year institution at some time during the 1995–96 academic year said that they intended to transfer to a 4-year institution and complete a bachelor's degree, and about one-half said that they were working on an associate's degree (see supplemental table 19-1).

The transfer rates of community college students are related to their initial degree goals. About one-half (51 percent) of the students who intended to obtain a bachelor's degree transferred to a 4-year college, compared with about one-fourth (26 percent) of those who initially sought an associate's degree. Among students with an initial associate's or bachelor's degree goal, characteristics associated with higher transfer rates include enrolling in a community college in the same year as high school graduation, always attending full time, or having a parent with a bachelor's or higher degree. Students who began with a bachelor's degree goal were less likely to complete an associate's degree before transferring than transfer students who started with an associate's degree goal (19 vs. 51 percent) (see supplemental table 19-1).

Among the students who started at a community college in 1995–96 and then transferred, about 80 percent had either completed a bachelor's degree or were still enrolled at a 4-year institution about 6 years later. Such transfer students were more likely to complete a bachelor's degree within 6 years if they initially had a bachelor's degree goal instead of an associate's degree goal (44 vs. 29 percent) and if they always attended full time (52 vs. 28 percent if not always full time). Compared with the transfers from public 2-year institutions, students with a bachelor's degree goal who started at 4-year institutions were more likely to complete a bachelor's degree in 6 years (63 vs. 44 percent) and were less likely to be still enrolled at a 4-year institution (12 vs. 38 percent) (see also *indicator 20*).

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFERS: Percentage of students beginning at public 2-year institutions in 1995–96 who transferred to a 4-year institution by initial degree goal, and percentage of transfers and students who began at 4-year institutions who persisted through June 2001



[1]Enrolled at a 4-year institution without a bachelor's degree in June 2001.

NOTE: Excludes the 11 percent of beginning students with a certificate goal and 16 percent with no expressed goal. "Transfers" include those who transferred to a different 2-year institution before transferring to a 4-year institution.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1996/01 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 3, 8

Supplemental Table 19-1

NCES 97–266

NCES 2001–197

NCES 2003–151

Wellman 2002

Postsecondary Persistence and Progress

Institutional Retention and Student Persistence at 4-Year Institutions

Among bachelor's degree seekers beginning at a 4-year institution in 1995–96, just over half graduated from that institution within 6 years. The overall bachelor's degree attainment rate was higher because some students transferred and earned a degree elsewhere.

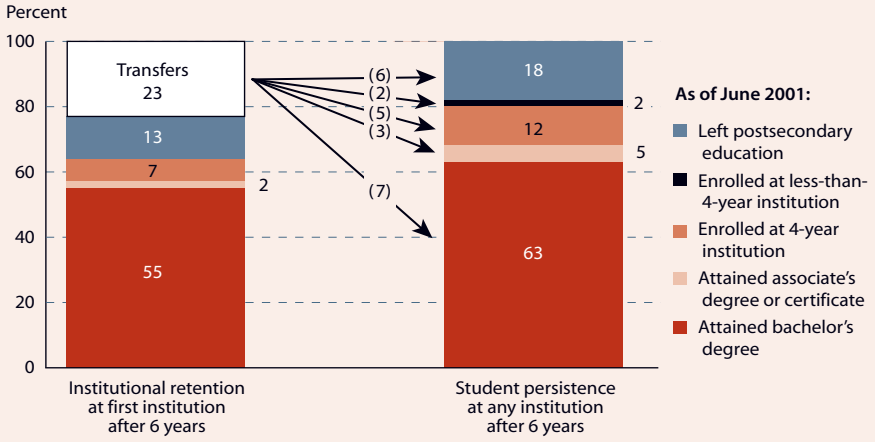
Postsecondary institutions and other organizations frequently report graduation rates for 4-year colleges and universities. ACT, for example, publishes 5-year graduation rates for different types of institutions each year, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is required by law to report 6-year graduation rates annually for each member institution.[1]

However, the institutional perspective provides only a partial picture of students' success because institutions are rarely able to track students who leave their institution. Calculating graduation rates from the student perspective involves following students throughout the postsecondary system. This approach results in higher graduation rates because some students who begin at one institution earn a degree elsewhere.

Among students who intended to earn a bachelor's degree and began their postsecondary education at a 4-year institution in 1995–96, 55 percent had earned a bachelor's degree at that institution within 6 years. However, approximately one-quarter of those seeking a bachelor's degree transferred from their first institution and continued their education elsewhere. When the outcomes for these transfer students are considered, the cohort's overall bachelor's degree attainment rate increases to 63 percent.

Attainment rates and transfer behavior differed for students who began at public versus private not-for-profit 4-year institutions. For example, students who began at public institutions in 1995–96 were less likely than their peers who began at private not-for-profit institutions to earn a bachelor's degree at their first institution (50 vs. 65 percent), more likely to transfer to another institution (24 vs. 21 percent), and less likely to attain a bachelor's degree at any institution within 6 years (57 vs. 73 percent). In both the public and private not-for-profit sectors, students who began at doctorate-granting institutions were more likely than those who began at nondoctorate-granting institutions to earn a bachelor's degree either at their first institution or overall (see supplemental table 20-1).

RETENTION AND PERSISTENCE: Percentage distribution of 1995–96 first-time beginning students at 4-year institutions according to their enrollment status or degree attainment at the first and at all institutions attended as of June 2001



[1]ACT reports are available at *http://www.act.org/news/releases/2001/update.html*; the NCAA reports are available at *http://www.ncaa.org/*.

NOTE: Only those students with a bachelor's degree goal were included. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Students who attained a degree and then transferred or remained enrolled are included only in the attainment categories.

SOURCE: Berkner, L., He, S., and Forrest Cataldi, E. (2002). *Descriptive Summary of 1995–96 Beginning Postsecondary Students: Six Years Later* (NCES 2003–151), figure 5. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1996/01 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 3, 8
Supplemental Table 20-1

Postsecondary Persistence and Progress

Time to Bachelor's Degree Completion

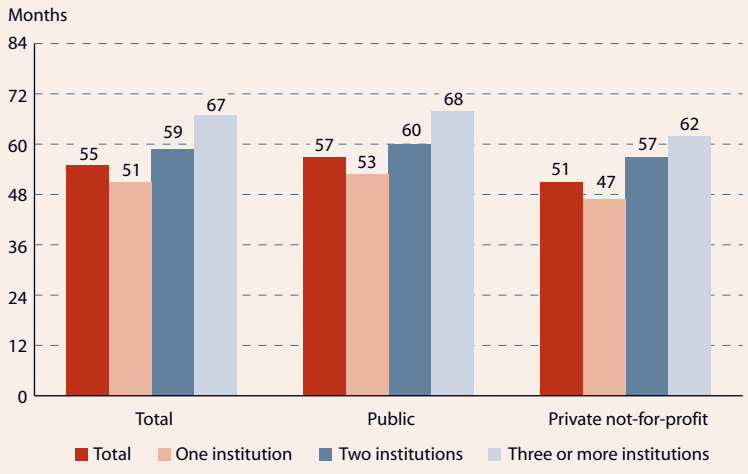
First-time recipients of bachelor's degrees in 1999–2000 who had not stopped out of college took about 55 months from first enrollment to degree completion.

On average, first-time recipients of bachelor's degrees in 1999–2000 who had not stopped out of college for 6 months or more took about 55 months from first enrollment to degree completion. Graduates who had attended multiple institutions took longer to complete a degree. For example, those who attended only one institution averaged 51 months between postsecondary entry and completion of a bachelor's degree, compared with 59 months for those who attended two institutions and 67 months for those who attended three or more institutions. This pattern was found among graduates of both public and private not-for-profit institutions.

Students who begin at public 2-year institutions must transfer to another institution in order to complete a 4-year degree. Students who did so took about a year and one-half longer to complete a bachelor's degree than students who began at public 4-year institutions (71 versus 55 months), and almost 2 years longer than those who began at private not-for-profit 4-year institutions (50 months). The type of institution from which graduates *received* a degree was also related to time to degree: graduates of public institutions averaged about 6 months longer to complete a degree than graduates of private not-for-profit institutions (57 vs. 51 months; see supplemental table 21-1).

Other factors are also related to time to degree completion. As parents' education increases, the average time to degree completion decreases. In addition, as age and length of time between high school graduation and postsecondary entry increases, time to degree completion also increases. Higher grade-point averages were associated with a shorter time to degree completion among graduates of public institutions but not among graduates of private not-for-profit institutions.

COMPLETION OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE: Average number of months between postsecondary entry and degree completion among 1999–2000 first-time recipients of bachelor's degrees who did not stop out of college for 6 months or more, by control of degree-granting institution and number of institutions attended



NOTE: Sixty-nine percent of first-time recipients of bachelor's degrees had not stopped out of college for 6 months or more. Included in the total but not shown separately are those who graduated from private for-profit institutions.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2000/01 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:2000/01).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 8

Supplemental Table 21-1

NCES 2002–130

Postsecondary Persistence and Progress

Postsecondary Attainment of 1988 8th-Graders

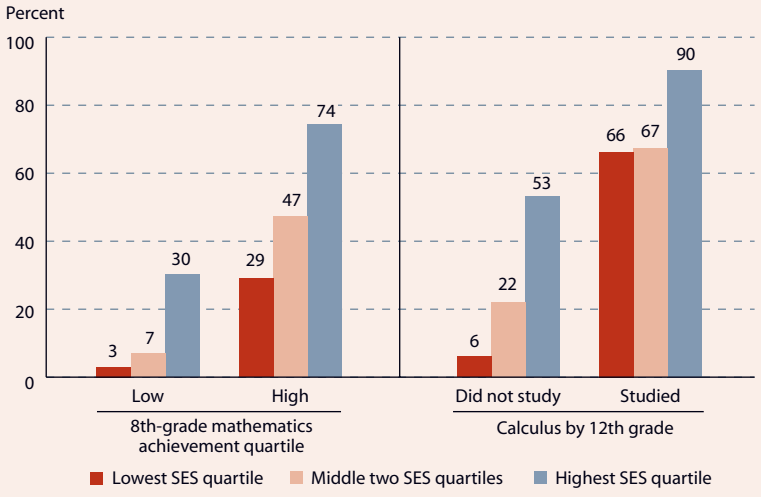
Postsecondary attainment rates vary with students' socioeconomic status, but rigorous academic preparation and accomplishment can partially compensate for disadvantaged backgrounds.

Overall, about three-quarters of 1988 8th-graders participated in some postsecondary education by 2000: 47 percent earned some college credits but less than a bachelor's degree, and 30 percent completed a bachelor's or higher degree (see supplemental table 22-1). Postsecondary attainment varied with the student's background characteristics, but high achievement and challenging coursework partially mitigated a disadvantaged background.

The likelihood of completing a bachelor's or higher degree increased with students' socioeconomic status (SES): 7 percent of low-SES students, 24 percent of middle-SES students, and 60 percent of high-SES students completed such a degree by 2000. Among high-achieving students, attaining a college degree still increased along with SES. For example, among students who scored in the highest mathematics test quartile in 8th grade, the likelihood of earning a bachelor's or higher degree increased with SES, from 29 percent among those from low-SES families to 47 percent among those in the middle two quartiles, and to 74 percent among those with the highest SES (see supplemental table 22-2). A similar pattern applied to students who had studied algebra in 8th grade.

Although SES is related to attainment, strong academic preparation and achievement in school increase the likelihood that low-SES students, especially, will finish college. Among low-SES students, high achievers on 8th-grade mathematics tests were about 10 times more likely than low achievers to complete a degree by 2000. In contrast, among high-SES students, high achievers were only 2.4 times more likely than low achievers to complete a degree. Similarly, low-SES students who had studied calculus in high school were about 10 times more likely than those who had not studied calculus to have earned at least a bachelor's degree by 2000. In contrast, middle-SES students were only 3 times more likely to complete a degree—and high-SES students 1.7 times more likely—if they had studied calculus in high school. Achieving high test scores and studying calculus were associated with higher rates of college completion, and the association was stronger for low-SES students than for others in this cohort.

STUDENT ATTAINMENT: Percentage of 1988 8th-graders in selected categories who had completed at least a bachelor's degree by 2000, by family socioeconomic status



NOTE: The SES variable has five equally weighted, standardized components: father's education, mother's education, family income, father's occupation, and mother's occupation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/2000), "Fourth Follow-up, 2000."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Tables 22-1, 22-2

Adelman 1999

Postsecondary Persistence and Progress

Persistence and Attainment of Students With Pell Grants

Pell Grant recipients tend to start with more disadvantages than low- and middle-income nonrecipients, but no statistically significant differences are found in their overall persistence after 6 years.

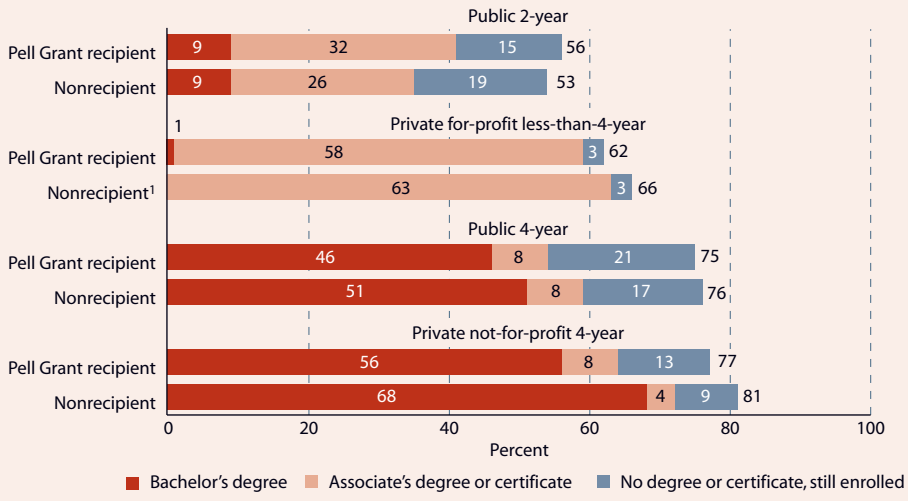
The Pell Grant program is the largest federal grant program for undergraduates. Almost 4 million students received close to $8 billion in Pell Grants in 2000–01, with an average award of $2,040 (U.S. Department of Education 2001). Pell Grants are awarded to students who demonstrate sufficient financial need based on family income, assets, and other factors. Although most recipients come from low-income families, some students from middle-income families also receive a Pell Grant based on factors such as having siblings in college.

Due to their disadvantaged backgrounds, recipients of Pell Grants are more likely than nonrecipients to face obstacles related to their academic strength and personal circumstances (see supplemental tables 23-1 and 23-2). Recipients from low- and middle-income families are not as well prepared academically as comparable nonrecipients. The former are also more likely to have certain characteristics that have been shown to put them at risk for not completing a postsecondary education, such as delaying enrollment, being financially independent, having dependents other than a spouse, or being a single parent (NCES 97–578).

Even though Pell Grant recipients who began their postsecondary studies in 1995–96 were more disadvantaged than nonrecipients, no statistically significant differences were found in the overall persistence rates of the two groups across all institution types. Recipients are students who received any Pell Grants by 1997–98. Persistence is the attainment of any postsecondary degree or certificate, or if no degree or certificate was attained, enrollment at a postsecondary institution 6 years later. About three-quarters of students persisted at 4-year institutions regardless of Pell Grant status. Persistence rates were lower at less-than-4-year institutions.

Although no differences were found in the overall persistence rates at 4-year institutions, recipients of Pell Grants were less likely than nonrecipients to attain a bachelor's degree within 6 years. No statistically significant differences were detected in the attainment rates (bachelor's, associate's, or certificates) of recipients and nonrecipients who began at public 2-year or private for-profit less-than-4-year institutions (see supplemental table 23-3).

PERSISTENCE IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: Percentage of 1995–96 low- and middle-income beginning postsecondary students who attained a certificate or degree or were still enrolled in 2001, by receipt of Pell Grant and type of institution first attended



[1]Percentage with bachelor's degree rounds to zero.

NOTE: Low- and middle-income students include all dependent students whose parents had an annual income of less than $70,000 in 1994 and all independent students who, combined with their spouse's earnings, had an annual income of less than $25,000 in 1994. The 3-year persistence rates discussed in *indicator 24* of *The Condition of Education 2002* are lower than the persistence rates shown here. Students who stopped out for 3 or more months or made a downward transfer (e.g., from a 4-year to a less-than-4-year institution) were excluded from the percentage of those who persisted in the earlier analysis but not from this one. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1996/01 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 3, 6, 8

Supplemental Tables 23-1, 23-2, 23-3

NCES 97–578, NCES 2002–025, NCES 2002–169

U.S. Department of Education 2001