

Education

Who Serves Minority Undergraduates in Colorado?

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The Bell Policy Center

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The Bell Policy Center

The Bell Policy Center is a nonprofit public policy organization committed to making Colorado a state of opportunity for all. The Bell seeks to reinvigorate the debate on issues affecting the well-being of Coloradans and to promote public policies that open gateways to opportunity.

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2. Who Goes to College in Colorado, and Who Doesn't?
3. Who Finishes College in Colorado, and Who Doesn't?
4. Who Serves Low-Income Undergraduate Students in Colorado?
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Introduction

In today's competitive and knowledge-based job market, more education means more income. Workers who want to make ends meet and provide opportunities for their family usually need an associate's degree at the least, and fare better with a bachelor's degree.

While Colorado has a highly educated workforce largely imported from other states, we do a mediocre job of graduating our own young people from college. The rates of educational success are even worse for Hispanics, blacks and young people from low-income families — those who most need the boost of a college education to avoid a life of poverty and dependence.

Colorado must counteract these shortfalls by offering all its young people an education that leads to financial opportunity and a life of self-sufficiency. The state's economic and social health depends on it.

The Bell Policy Center believes sound social and fiscal policies grow from thorough, objective research. To solve a problem, we must first understand it.

This white paper is the fifth in a seven-part series that uses state and national data to evaluate Colorado's performance in educating young adults, and to identify promising remedies for improvement.

Who Serves Minority Undergraduate Students in Colorado?



Executive Summary

The face of college students in Colorado is overwhelmingly white, particularly at the state's most prestigious universities and private colleges.

Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans attend college at much lower rates than their white and Asian American peers. And minority students are concentrated at community colleges in rural areas and in Pueblo and Denver.

This brief draws on new data from the U.S. Department of Education to illustrate which of the state's 46 public and private nonprofit colleges and universities best serve minority students. The findings include:

- The 2000 Census reports that minorities made up 25 percent of Colorado's population. Yet in the fall of 2001, less than 17 percent of the state's college students were minorities.



- Of Colorado's 42,000 minority undergraduate students enrolled in 2001, a disproportionate share of nearly 13,000 attended one of four community colleges in Denver or Colorado Springs.
- On a per capita basis, the largest minority student populations in 2001 were at two-year colleges in Trinidad, Denver, La Junta, Pueblo and Aurora, and at four-year colleges in Alamosa and Pueblo.
- The Community College of Denver logged the biggest growth in minority student enrollment in the past decade. The Emily Griffith Opportunity School in Denver serves the single largest number of minority college students, more than twice as many as Colorado's flagship school, the University of Colorado at Boulder.
- More than half of the state's minority students enroll in a two-year college rather than a four-year college. While a two-year degree is good, a four-year degree is far better, improving earning power and opening the door for post-graduate studies.
- Most minority students attend public colleges and universities. Minority enrollment at proprietary colleges, which are private, for-profit institutions offering trade and technical training, nearly doubled in the past decade.



Minority student participation

While white and Asian students are well represented in undergraduate enrollment in U.S. higher education institutions, black, Hispanic, and American Indian students are underrepresented. Colorado is no exception to this nationwide trend, as has been reported in numerous national and state research studies.

The Bell Policy Center's *Who Goes to College in Colorado, and Who Doesn't?* white paper, No. 2 in this series, documents this problem, which starts with very low high school graduation rates for minority and low-income students and inadequate undergraduate enrollment rates of those who do receive a high school diploma.

Postsecondary access and success for underrepresented student populations have increasingly become a critical issue, receiving significant attention from the governor, state officials, higher education institutions, the media and the policy community. In light of the projected enormous growth of the Hispanic student population in the coming years,¹ increasing the undergraduate enrollment rates of minority students will remain a central issue that requires decisive and effective policy remedies.



This paper seeks to draw attention to the role higher education institutions play in serving minority students by looking at the minority share of undergraduate enrollment in Colorado. In order to design effective policy initiatives, it is important to know the present and past performance of institutions in serving minority students and to identify those that need to enhance their efforts to recruit and retain them.

Data used for Bell's analysis

This analysis utilizes a new set of data that recently became available from the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education.

Specifically, Tom Mortenson, editor and publisher of *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*, a monthly research newsletter, has analyzed fall term undergraduate headcount enrollment data reported by 6,082 postsecondary institutions for 1992 and 2001.² The minority share includes students who self-identified as black, Hispanic or American Indian, and was calculated by dividing the number of minority students by total undergraduate enrollment in the fall of those years.

Colorado and the nation

Before looking at the institutional level, it is important to see how minority undergraduate enrollment in Colorado compares to the rest of the nation. In 2001, 41,948 of 249,381 undergraduates in all higher education institutions in Colorado were minority students, or 16.8 percent. That was below the national average of 24 percent, ranking the state 24th in the nation.³

Between 1992 and 2001, the minority share of undergraduate enrollment in Colorado increased by 1.8 percent, below the national average of 4.9 percent, ranking the state 37th. This poor performance is especially troubling in light of the tremendous increase in Colorado's Hispanic population over the same time period. The state Demographer's Office reports the state's Hispanic population grew from 424,000 in 1990 to 735,000 in 2000, a 73 percent increase.

Minority undergraduate enrollment, by institution

Among the 46 public and private nonprofit higher education institutions in Colorado, Trinidad State Junior College, serving Trinidad and Alamosa, and the Community College of Denver have the highest share of minority students with 46.6 percent each.

They are followed by Otero Junior College in La Junta with 35.3 percent, and Pueblo Community College and the Emily Griffith Opportunity School in Denver with 34.5 percent each.

All 10 institutions with the highest share of minority students are public institutions and the top five schools for minority enrollment are two-year colleges.



Table 1: Minority share of fall undergraduate enrollment at Colorado public and private nonprofit postsecondary institutions (2001)

Rank	Institution	2001	Rank	Institution	2001
1	Trinidad State Junior College	46.6%	24	Colorado Christian University	12.0%
2	Community College of Denver	46.6%	25	University of Denver	11.8%
3	Otero Junior College	35.3%	26	Arapahoe Community College	11.2%
4	Pueblo Community College	34.5%	27	Mesa State College	11.0%
5	Emily Griffith Opportunity School	34.5%	28	University of Northern Colorado	10.3%
6	Adams State College	33.6%	29	Colorado College	9.8%
7	Colorado State University at Pueblo	29.9%	30	San Juan Basin Technical College	9.4%
8	Community College of Aurora	27.9%	31	Colorado State University	8.5%
9	T H Pickens Tech Center	25.1%	32	University of Colorado at Boulder	8.0%
10	Pikes Peak Community College	23.4%	33	Colorado Mountain College	7.5%
11	Fort Lewis College	21.7%	34	Nazarene Bible College	7.3%
12	Aims Community College	21.3%	35	Western State College	7.3%
13	Lamar Community College	21.0%	36	Northeastern Junior College	7.2%
14	Johnson & Wales University, Denver	20.9%	37	Colorado School of Mines	7.2%
15	Metropolitan State College of Denver	19.0%	38	Colorado Northwestern Community College	6.4%
16	University of Colorado at Denver	13.5%	39	Delta-Montrose Technical College	6.3%
17	United States Air Force Academy	13.4%	40	Boulder College of Massage Therapy	5.6%
18	University of Colorado, Colorado Spgs.	13.2%	41	Naropa University	5.1%
19	Regis University	13.2%	42	Montessori Education Center of the Rockies	2.0%
20	Red Rocks Community College	13.1%	43	Centura-Penrose Hospital School of Clinical Laboratory Science	0.0%
21	University of Colorado Health Sciences Center	12.9%	44	Health One School of Medical Technology	0.0%
22	Morgan Community College	12.5%	45	Teikyo Loretto Heights University	0.0%
23	Front Range Community College, Westminster Campus	12.2%	46	Yeshiva Toras Chaim Talmudical Seminary	0.0%

We can identify the institutions that had the greatest change in their share of minority students by comparing data on fall undergraduate enrollment for each public and private nonprofit institution for 1992 and 2001. The following tables list the institutions that experienced the most significant change in their share of minority students.

Table 2 indicates that the Delta-Montrose Technical College experienced the largest decrease in its share of minority students, down by 9.7 percent, followed by the Emily Griffith Opportunity School, down by 4.2 percent, the Colorado School of Mines, down by



3.4 percent, Colorado Mountain College, down by 2.2 percent, and the Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, down by 1.6 percent.

The Emily Griffith Opportunity School, despite its decrease, had the fifth largest share of minority students and served the largest number among all of Colorado’s public and private nonprofit institutions in 2001.

Table 2: Public and private nonprofit institutions with the largest decrease in minority share of fall undergraduate enrollment (1992 to 2001)

Rank	Institution	1992-2001
1	Delta-Montrose Technical College	-9.7%
2	Emily Griffith Opportunity School	-4.2%
3	Colorado School of Mines	-3.4%
4	Colorado Mountain College	-2.2%
5	Nazarene Bible College	-1.6%
6	University of Colorado at Denver	-1.0%
7	Pueblo Community College	-0.8%
8	University of Colorado Health Sciences Center	-0.6%
9	Colorado Northwestern Community College	-0.5%
10	United States Air Force Academy	-0.4%
11	University of Colorado at Boulder	-0.4%

Table 3 reveals that the Community College of Denver experienced the largest increase in its share of minority students, up by 8.6 percent, followed by Fort Lewis College of Durango and Trinidad State Junior College, both up 6.8 percent, Community College of Aurora up 6.4 percent, and the Boulder College of Massage Therapy up 5.6 percent.

Table 3: Public and private nonprofit institutions with the largest increase in minority share of fall undergraduate enrollment (1992 to 2001)

Rank	Institution	1992-2001
1	Community College of Denver	8.6%
2	Fort Lewis College	6.8%
3	Trinidad State Junior College	6.8%
4	Community College of Aurora	6.4%
5	Boulder College of Massage Therapy	5.6%
6	Aims Community College	5.2%
7	Naropa University	5.1%
8	Lamar Community College	4.6%
9	T H Pickens Tech Center	4.4%
10	Colorado Christian University	4.3%



Although the minority share of undergraduate enrollment shows the relative diversity of the student population at each public and private nonprofit higher education institution, it does not explain which institutions serve the largest number of Colorado's 41,948 minority undergraduate students.

Table 4, which ranks institutions by their absolute number of minority students, shows that the Emily Griffith Opportunity School serves the largest number of with 4,082 enrolled. It is followed by the Metropolitan State College of Denver with 3,509, the Community College of Denver with 3,030, Pikes Peak Community College with 2,291, and Colorado State University at Fort Collins with 1,988.

All of the top 10 institutions are public, including four four-year institutions. They accounted for 52 percent of the state's enrolled undergraduate minority students.

Table 4: Fall undergraduate minority enrollment at Colorado public and private nonprofit postsecondary institutions (2001)

Rank	Institution	2001	Rank	Institution	2001
1	Emily Griffith Opportunity School	4,082	24	Colorado Mountain College	495
2	Metropolitan State College of Denver	3,509	25	University of Denver	484
3	Community College of Denver	3,030	26	Northeastern Junior College	272
4	Pikes Peak Community College	2,291	27	Morgan Community College	223
5	Colorado State University	1,988	28	Colorado Christian University	212
6	University of Colorado at Boulder	1,934	29	Colorado School of Mines	212
7	Pueblo Community College	1,680	30	Lamar Community College	209
8	Front Range Community College, Westminster Campus	1,654	31	Colorado College	190
9	Colorado State University at Pueblo	1,638	32	T H Pickens Tech Center	186
10	Aims Community College	1,465	33	Western State College	169
11	Community College of Aurora	1,354	34	Colorado Northwestern Community College	136
12	University of Colorado at Denver	1,183	35	Johnson & Wales University, Denver	135
13	University of Northern Colorado	1,051	36	Delta-Montrose Technical College	129
14	Fort Lewis College	960	37	San Juan Basin Technical College	89
15	Trinidad State Junior College	923	38	University of Colorado Health Sciences Center	49
16	Red Rocks Community College	905	39	Nazarene Bible College	34
17	Arapahoe Community College	817	40	Naropa University	22
18	Adams State College	727	41	Boulder College of Massage Therapy	14
19	University of Colorado at Colorado Springs	705	42	Montessori Education Center of the Rookies	1
20	Regis University	704	43	Centura-Penrose Hospital School of Clinical Laboratory Science	0
21	United States Air Force Academy	585	44	Health One School of Medical Technology	0
22	Mesa State College	578	45	Teikyo Loretto Heights University	0
23	Otero Junior College	496	46	Yeshiva Toras Chaim Talmudical Seminary	0



Types of degrees pursued by minority students

Undergraduate enrollment is a useful measure in assessing postsecondary access for underrepresented minority students. But a closer look at minority enrollment at Colorado's 94 public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions indicates a significant disparity among the various levels of undergraduate studies pursued.

Specifically, as illustrated by Table 5, while the majority of all undergraduate students pursued studies leading to a bachelor's degree or higher in 1992 and 2001, the majority of minority students pursued studies leading to an associate's degree or higher, but less than a bachelor's degree.

This indicator is troubling, since the lifetime earnings associated with a bachelor's degree are significantly higher and also allow for the pursuit of graduate studies, which is a requirement for many professional fields.

Table 5: Fall undergraduate enrollment at Colorado's higher education institutions, by level of study (1992 and 2001)

Level	1992 (Total)	1992 (Minority)	2001 (Total)	2001 (Minority)
4 or More Years (Baccalaureate or Higher)	122,500	14,200	136,347	17,688
At Least 2, but Less than 4 Years	94,155	17,894	103,631	22,702
Less than 2 Years (Below Associate's Degree)	3,014	822	9,403	1,558

A more revealing way of viewing the discrepancy between all students and underrepresented minority students is to look at the distribution among the three levels.

Table 6 shows that while the majority of all students were enrolled at the highest undergraduate level of study, most minority students were enrolled at the level that leads to an associate's degree. This situation actually worsened from 1992 to 2001, as the percentage of minority students pursuing at least a bachelor's degree dropped slightly, down by 0.9 percent, and the percentage pursuing the lowest level degree increased, up by 1.2 percent.

Table 6: Distribution of total students and minority students, by level of study (1992 and 2001)

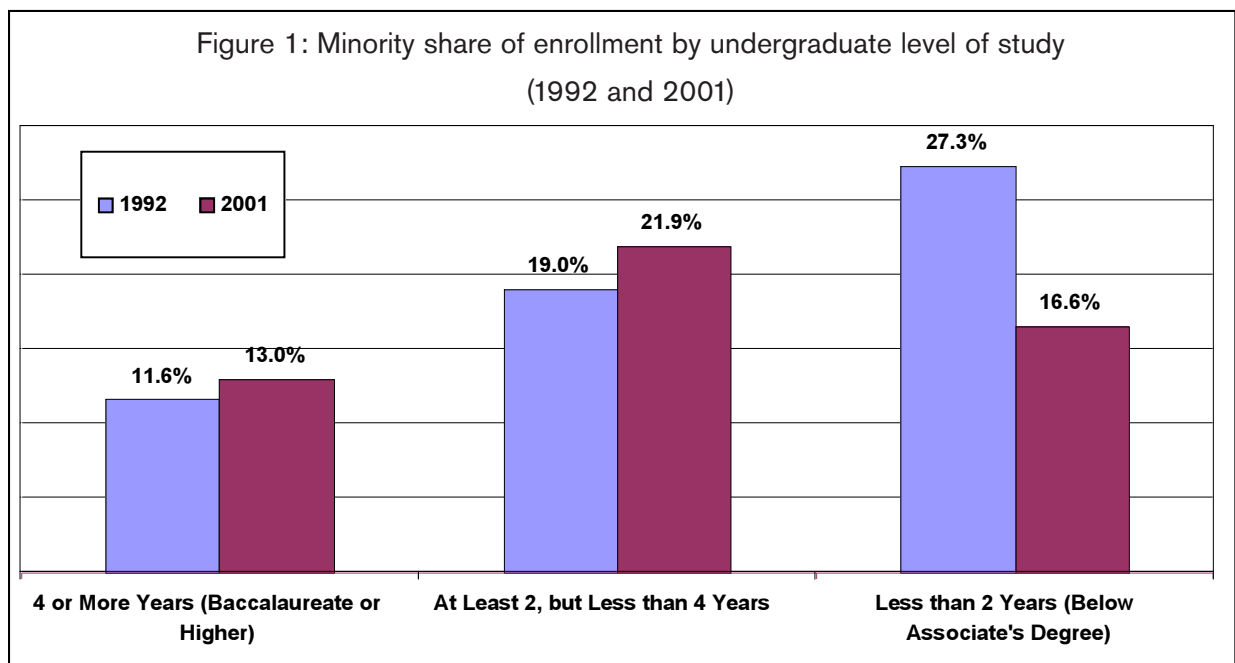
Level	1992 (Total)	1992 (Minority)	2001 (Total)	2001 (Minority)
4 or More Years (Baccalaureate or Higher)	55.80%	43.10%	54.70%	42.20%
At Least 2, but Less than 4 Years	42.90%	54.40%	41.60%	54.10%
Less than 2 Years (Below Associate's Degree)	1.80%	2.50%	3.80%	3.70%



Minority student enrollment, by type of degree

The number of minority students in Colorado grew from just over 11 percent of all students pursuing bachelor's degrees in 1992 to 13 percent in 2001.

As Figure 1 shows, minority students comprised a greater percentage of students pursuing an associate's degree in 2001 but a smaller percentage of students pursuing less than an associate's degree. Despite this improvement, when compared to the nine out of 10 majority race students who pursue bachelor's degrees, minorities continue to lag considerably in accessing the highest level of undergraduate studies.



Minority student enrollment, by higher education sector

It is also important to examine minority enrollment by higher education sector, to identify discrepancies between enrollment trends.

Table 7 shows the total and minority undergraduate enrollment at public, private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions. The majority of students attend public institutions, regardless of race and/or ethnicity.

However, in 1992 the second largest provider of all undergraduate education were private nonprofit schools. By 2001 more students attended private for-profit schools, which are now the second largest provider. For-profit schools were the second largest provider for minority students in both 1992 and 2001.



Table 7: Undergraduate enrollment for all students and for minority students, by higher education sector (1992 and 2001)

Sector	1992 (Total)	1992 (Minority)	2001 (Total)	2001 (Minority)
Public	197,527	29,157	212,543	35,724
Private Nonprofit	12,426	1,272	15,087	1,796
Private For-Profit	9,716	2,487	21,751	4,428

Table 8 provides the distribution of all undergraduate and minority students among the three sectors of higher education.

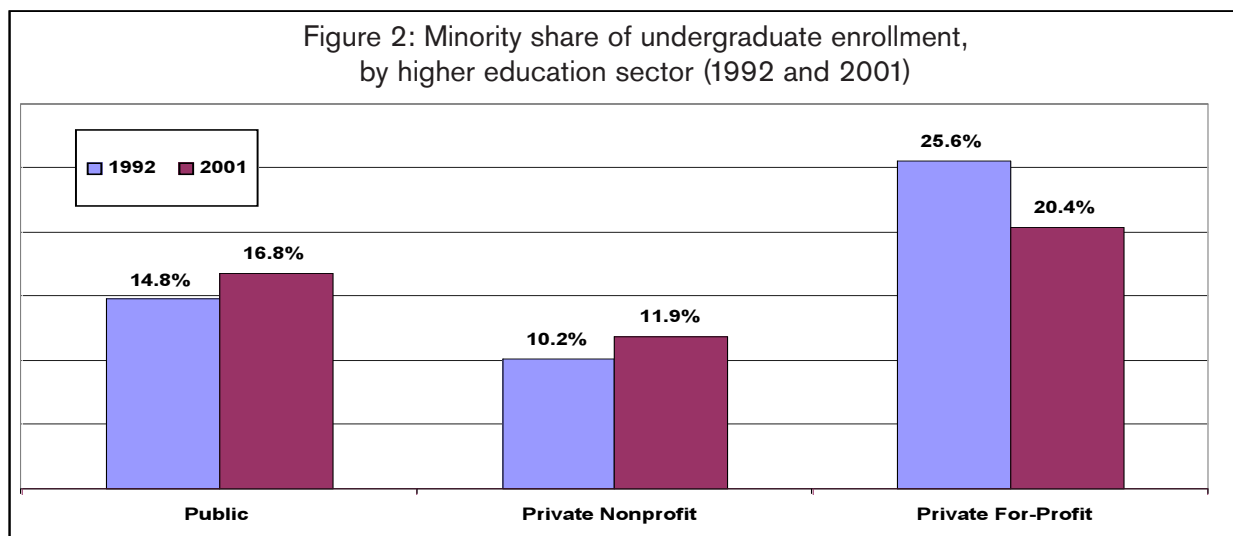
Clearly the public sector educates the vast majority of students in Colorado, but it is surprising that in 2001, all students and minority students enrolled in public institutions at the same rate, 85.2 percent, indicating a decrease from 1992 for both groups.

In contrast, the private for-profit and private nonprofit schools educated a larger percentage of minority students than all students both in 1992 and 2001. The share of minority students attending for-profit schools increased by 3 percent from 1992 to 2001.

Table 8: Distribution of total undergraduate students and minority students, by higher education sector (1992 and 2001)

Sector	1992 (Total)	1992 (Minority)	2001 (Total)	2001 (Minority)
Public	90.0%	88.6%	85.2%	85.2%
Private Nonprofit	5.7%	3.9%	6.0%	4.3%
Private For-Profit	4.4%	7.6%	8.7%	10.6%

Figure 2 illustrates the overrepresentation of minority students at private for-profit institutions, but also shows that the share of minority enrollment increased at both public and private nonprofit institutions. Specifically, in 2001 private for-profit institutions carried the largest share of minority enrollment, at 20.4 percent, a decrease from the 25.6 percent rate of 1992. In contrast, the minority enrollment share grew at public and private nonprofit institutions.





Minority undergraduate enrollment in 2003, by sector and level

The National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis has released the latest available enrollment data from the fall 2003 semester that disaggregate enrollment by race, sector and level of study.⁴ This data provides the most recent snapshot of postsecondary enrollment in Colorado.

As shown in Table 9, full-time undergraduate minority students, especially black students, enroll at private for-profit institutions at much higher rates than white students. While on average only 10.3 percent of all Colorado students enroll at for-profit institutions, the rate is 22 percent for blacks, 16.9 percent for students categorized as “other”, and 13.8 percent for Hispanic students. In contrast, full-time undergraduate white students enroll at public and private nonprofit institutions at higher rates than other students.

Table 9: Distribution of full-time undergraduate students and minority students, by race and higher education sector (2003)

Sector	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
Public	93,327	4,060	12,140	14,095	123,622
Private Nonprofit	8,880	352	840	1,452	11,524
Private For-Profit	8,988	1,242	2,083	3,154	15,467
Total Enrollment	111,195	5,654	15,063	18,701	150,613
Public	83.9%	71.8%	80.6%	75.4%	82.1%
Private Nonprofit	8%	6.2%	5.6%	7.8%	7.7%
Private For-Profit	8.1%	22%	13.8%	16.9%	10.3%

An analysis of enrollment data on part-time undergraduate students, shown in Table 10, indicates white part-time undergraduate student enroll at the lowest rate, 4.2 percent, in private for-profit institutions, while black students enroll at the highest rate, 11.1 percent.

However, unlike with full-time students, white part-time students enroll at lower rates in private nonprofit institutions, while black students enroll at 6.1 percent and other minorities enroll at 10.1 percent, much higher rates than their full-time peers.

Table 10: Distribution of part-time undergraduate students and minority students, by race and higher education sector (2003)

Sector	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
Public	56,970	3,903	11,234	10,499	82,606
Private Nonprofit	3,125	288	416	1,282	5,111
Private For-Profit	2,655	525	661	908	4,749
Total Enrollment	62,750	4,716	12,311	12,689	92,466
Public	90.8%	82.8%	91.3%	82.7%	89.3%
Private Nonprofit	5%	6.1%	3.4%	10.1%	5.5%
Private For-Profit	4.2%	11.1%	5.4%	7.2%	5.1%



As shown in Table 11, full-time undergraduate students categorized as other, at 83.1 percent, and white, at 79.1 percent, enroll at higher rates in four-year institutions than their black peers at 63.3 percent and Hispanic peers at 65.3 percent.

This indicates that black and Hispanic student pursue studies leading to an associate's degree or less at disproportionately higher rates, while their white and other peers are more likely to pursue bachelor's degrees.

Table 11: Fall full-time undergraduate enrollment at Colorado's higher education institutions, by race and level of study (2003)

Level	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
4-Year or Above	88,010	3,581	9,843	15,543	116,977
2-Year	23,185	2,073	5,220	3,158	33,636
Total Enrollment	111,195	5,654	15,063	18,701	150,613
4-Year or Above	79.1%	63.3%	65.3%	83.1%	77.7%
2-Year	20.9%	36.7%	34.7%	16.9%	22.3%

An analysis of enrollment data for part-time undergraduate students yields different results. Other minorities enrolled part-time in four-year institutions at 52.8 percent, while whites enrolled at 34.4 percent, blacks at 30.9 percent and Hispanics at 27.6 percent. White part-time students, however, enrolled at two-year institutions at much higher rates than their full-time peers.

Table 12: Fall part-time undergraduate enrollment at Colorado's higher education institutions, by race and level of study (2003)

Level	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
4-Year or Above	21,601	1,456	3,401	6,696	33,154
2-Year	41,149	3,260	8,910	5,993	59,312
Total Enrollment	62,750	4,716	12,311	12,689	92,466
4-Year or Above	34.4%	30.9%	27.6%	52.8%	35.9%
2-Year	65.6%	69.1%	72.4%	47.2%	64.1%

Overall, part-time enrollment is concentrated at two-year institutions, while full-time enrollment is concentrated in four-year institutions. In contrast, undergraduate enrollment, regardless of full-time status, is concentrated in public institutions.

Minority students enroll at private for-profit and two-year institutions at much higher rates, indicating that minority students are overrepresented in vocational and occupational training programs and underrepresented in programs leading to bachelor's degrees.



Endnotes

¹ Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education. December 2003. *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State, Income, and Race/Ethnicity, 1998 to 2018*. Boulder, CO: WICHE.

² The data were reported on the fall enrollment forms of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>. The data set is available is at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data.asp>.

³ Mortenson, Tom. 2004. "Underrepresented Minorities' Share of Undergraduate Enrollments at State Flagship Universities, 1992 and 2001." *Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY: Environmental Scanning of Opportunity for Postsecondary Education*. No. 146 (August). The state with the highest minority share of undergraduate enrollment was New Mexico at 48.6 percent, followed by Texas at 37.6 percent and Mississippi at 37.7 percent. Maine had the smallest minority share at 3 percent.

⁴ National Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis. "2003 Enrollments by State, Sector, Level, Race and Gender." www.higheredinfo.org The data reported is based on the fall 2003 enrollment survey of the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>

For more information on minority access to postsecondary education in Colorado, contact Spiros Protopsaltis, policy analyst, at The Bell Policy Center, (303) 297-0456 in metro Denver, (866) 283-8051 toll-free in Colorado, or at spiros@thebell.org.

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