

DRAFT
STATUS OF MINORITIES IN NEW JERSEY HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

The Commission on Higher Education is responsible for statewide planning, coordination, and advocacy for higher education. It is also charged with informing and making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on higher education initiatives and incentive programs of statewide significance. Within this context, the Commission adopted a vision and long-range plan for higher education in 1996 that emphasize excellence, access, and affordability, with the goal of serving all residents who have the interest and potential to learn.

The Commission has often expressed its belief that New Jersey's diverse student body is a strength of the state's higher education system and should be actively cultivated. The Presidents' Council has also publicly stated that providing students with a diverse learning environment is a core value for their institutions. Indeed, a growing body of research demonstrates that a diverse campus community benefits all students -- minority and nonminority alike. It enriches their learning experience and better prepares them to live and work in racially and ethnically integrated communities.

This status report on minorities in New Jersey higher education follows a January 2000 presentation on comprehensive diversity planning in higher education. That presentation highlighted the importance of formulating carefully conceived goals for students, faculty, and staff; developing an implementation or action plan; and establishing accountability for improvement by the governing boards and campus administrations. At that time, the Commission asked staff to recommend appropriate additional steps that might be taken to enhance diversity in New Jersey higher education.

The success of New Jersey's colleges and universities in enrolling minority students and producing a diverse cohort of well-prepared graduates is critical for individuals and the state. All New Jerseyans must have opportunities to contribute to and participate in economic prosperity, and advanced education has become a requisite for success in today's global economy.

The nation's demographic landscape has changed dramatically in recent years, and it will continue to do so. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts that the country's population will increase by 50 percent in the first half of the 21st century, with ethnic minority groups making up nearly half of the total population. Clearly, this shift will have major implications for all levels of the educational system.

In its recent report, *Crossing the Great Divide*, Educational Testing Service (ETS) projects that national undergraduate enrollment will expand by 2.6 million new students by 2015, and about 80 percent of those will be minorities – blacks, Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders. New Jersey's enrollment, already diverse, will become even more so as ETS projects that by the year 2015, minority student enrollment will exceed

40% in the state. While these projections are good news, black and Hispanic students are expected to continue to lag behind whites in college attendance nationally and here in New Jersey.

This report provides an overview of the current status of minorities in New Jersey higher education institutions. Systemwide data on minority student enrollment, retention, and graduation and on minority faculty provides some insight into the current status of campus racial diversity without comparing individual institutions.¹ The information serves as baseline data from which to track the higher education system's progress toward a changing profile in the new millennium. This analysis includes data on New Jersey's three public research universities, nine four-year state colleges and universities, nineteen community colleges, fourteen four-year colleges and universities with a public mission, three degree-granting proprietary schools, and eight theological institutions. In addition, it includes a special focus on New Jersey's 30 Abbott school districts.

Programs That Support Diversity in New Jersey

New Jersey actively supports diversity in higher education with a number of state and campus-based programs focused on students and faculty. The most comprehensive is New Jersey's Educational Opportunity Fund Program, which provides financial aid and intensive academic and personal support to help disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed in the college environment. The campus-based program serves roughly 12,400 students each year, over 75 percent of whom are minorities.

College Bound and the New Jersey GEAR UP State Project feed into the EOF program, with enrichment activities and support programs that help at-risk youngsters in grades 6-12 complete high school and prepare for the rigors of a college education. These campus-based programs make a profound difference in these students' lives, opening the door to new academic and career opportunities. The state's Education of Language Minority Students (ELMS) and Special Needs grant programs help individual campuses address the learning needs of specialized student populations. In addition, an incentive grant program to improve graduation and transfer rates for minority or low-income students was implemented in 1997 in response to recommendations contained in the long-range plan for higher education.

The Commission recently revamped its Minority Academic Career (MAC) program to more effectively build the pipeline of doctorally trained minorities and improve recruitment of minority faculty by the state's colleges and universities. Since program oversight was transferred to the Commission in July 1999, new regulations were adopted that transform the doctoral component of MAC from a loan-redemption program to a doctoral study and dissertation fellowship program. In addition, the new regulations implemented a new Incentive Hiring Grant component. To date, eight faculty incentive hiring grants totaling \$240,933 were awarded to seven institutions. Nine new doctoral fellows (six dissertation, 3 doctoral study) were named.

¹ The data in this report are drawn from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and the Student Unit Record Enrollment system.

New Jersey's higher education diversity programs form an impressive array of efforts designed to improve the recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation of students of color, as well as the enhancement of diversity in the faculty and in the administrative ranks. The state's nonprescriptive approach to encouraging diversity comports with its decentralized higher education structure and its guiding principle of autonomy.

A variety of campus officials share responsibility for the success of diversity efforts in New Jersey, including college and university presidents, admissions officers, student affairs personnel, financial aid officers, vice presidents, deans, and other administrators. They share a longstanding record of success and make a strong statement about the integral significance of diversity in American higher education today.

Minority Students in New Jersey

While minority enrollment in higher education is increasing, the lack of recent data on high school completion rates and postgraduation plans of high school graduates makes it impossible to assess accurately how many of these students entered higher education directly after completing high school. However, it is clear that P-12 school reform and precollege programs for students in the Abbott districts are beginning to have a positive impact on minority students' college participation rates. Table 1 on page 4 provides a comparison of total undergraduate enrollment in 1994 and 1999 by race and ethnicity.

College Enrollment Trends

Total minority enrollment among undergraduates increased between 1994 and 1999, with Asian American and Hispanic students accounting for the largest gains. While black undergraduate enrollment had the smallest level of increase (from 34,022 to 35,065), black students continue to represent the largest share of all minority student enrollments in the state.

Overall Minority Enrollment, 1994 vs. 1999

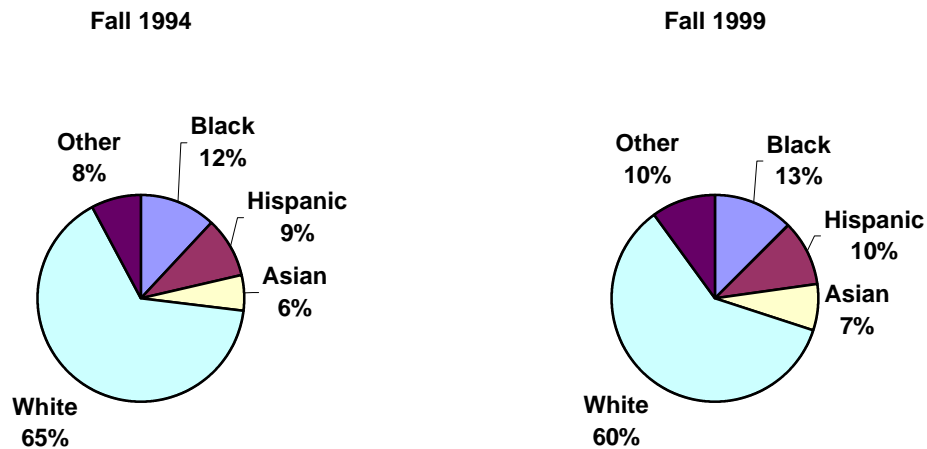
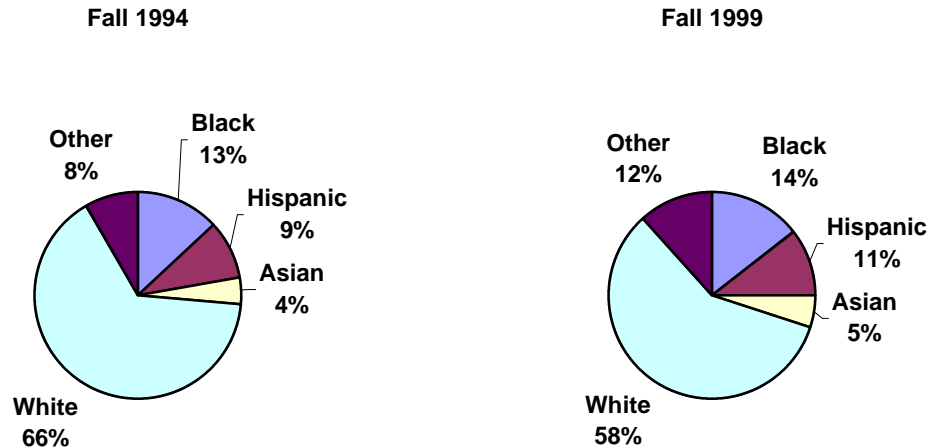


TABLE 1
1994 & 1999 Total Undergraduate Enrollment
by Race/Ethnicity

Sector	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian		Other		Total	
	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999	1994	1999
Public Research Universities	23,543	22,090	4,563	4,671	3,814	4,077	5,754	7,438	2,563	4,906	40,237	43,182
State Colleges & Universities	47,199	45,194	6,903	7,350	6,273	7,534	2,233	2,871	3,238	4,023	65,846	66,972
Community Colleges	88,971	69,813	17,557	17,151	12,493	15,158	5,589	6,790	11,152	13,970	135,762	122,882
Independent Colleges & Universities	28,017	28,530	4,999	5,893	3,428	4,793	2,128	2,790	4,876	5,418	43,448	47,424
Total	187,730	165,627	34,022	35,065	26,008	31,562	15,704	19,889	21,829	28,317	285,293	280,460

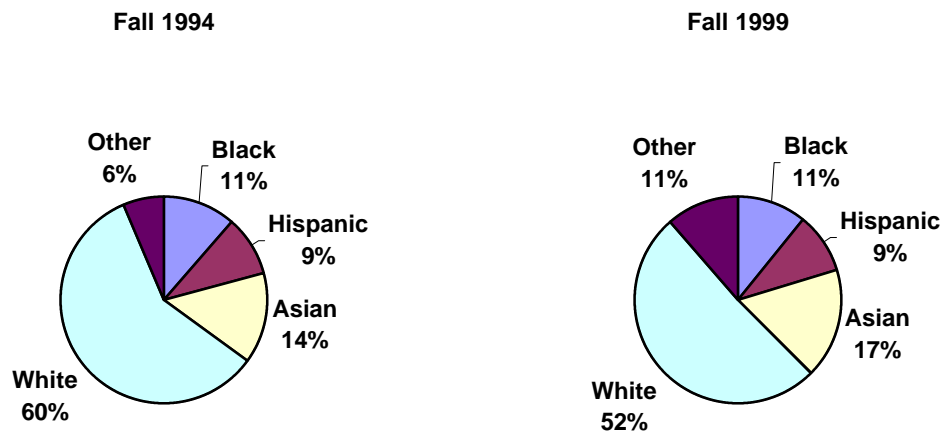
Community colleges enrolled the largest overall percentages of black and Hispanic students and saw the largest numerical increase in total Hispanic undergraduate enrollment.

Community College Enrollment, 1994 vs. 1999



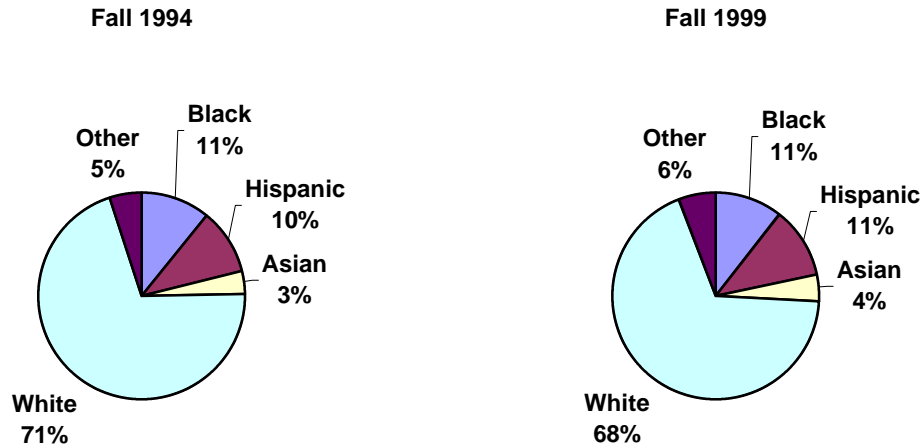
The largest proportion of Asian American undergraduate students were enrolled at the public research universities, where they exceed black and Hispanic students as identifiable groups. Black and Hispanic enrollment percentages were unchanged at these institutions between 1994 and 1999.

Public Research University Enrollment, 1994 vs. 1999



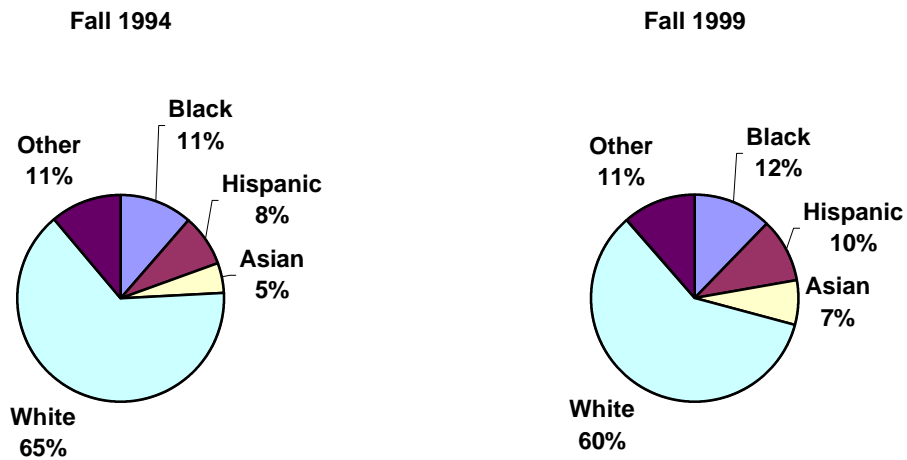
White students account for a significantly larger share of total enrollment at the state colleges and universities than in other sectors. This is primarily due to smaller proportions of Asian students and those in the “other” category, which includes students of unknown racial origin and nonresident aliens.

State College and University Enrollment, 1994 vs. 1999



The largest percentage increases in both total black and total Hispanic undergraduate student enrollment between fall 1994 and fall 1999 occurred at the independent colleges and universities, where the number grew 18 percent, to 5,893 in the case of black enrollment, and 40 percent, to 4,793 in the case of Hispanic enrollment.

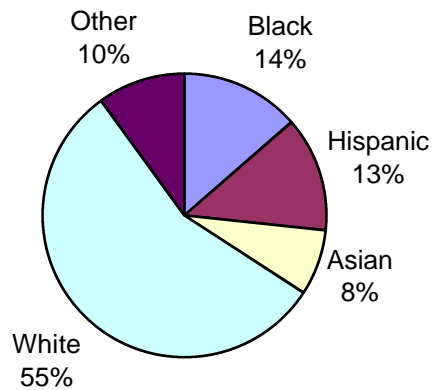
Independent College and University Enrollment, 1994 vs. 1999 (including proprietary and theological institutions)



Full-Time First-Time Freshmen

Approximately one-third of all full-time first-time freshmen in fall 1999 were minorities, a larger percentage than is seen among total undergraduate enrollment. Black students lead the minority student ranks as a percentage of full-time first-time freshmen. In 1999, almost half of the full-time first-time black and Hispanic freshmen entering a New Jersey institution enrolled in a community college, which has significant transfer and articulation implications for the four-year institutions.

Full-Time First-Time Freshmen - Fall 1999



Retention, Graduation, and Degrees Conferred

While the recruitment of minority students is an important benchmark, retention, transfer, and degree completion are even more significant measures of the success of diversity efforts in New Jersey. The data included in this section show that in most sectors and categories, minority students in New Jersey are making slight gains. As is seen nationally, Asian American students outpace other minority groups and white students in retention, graduation, and degree attainment. Recognizing that many minority students are recent immigrants, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and/or are the first in their families to attend college, institutions and the state must intensify efforts to help them overcome the academic, economic, and social hurdles that can impede success.

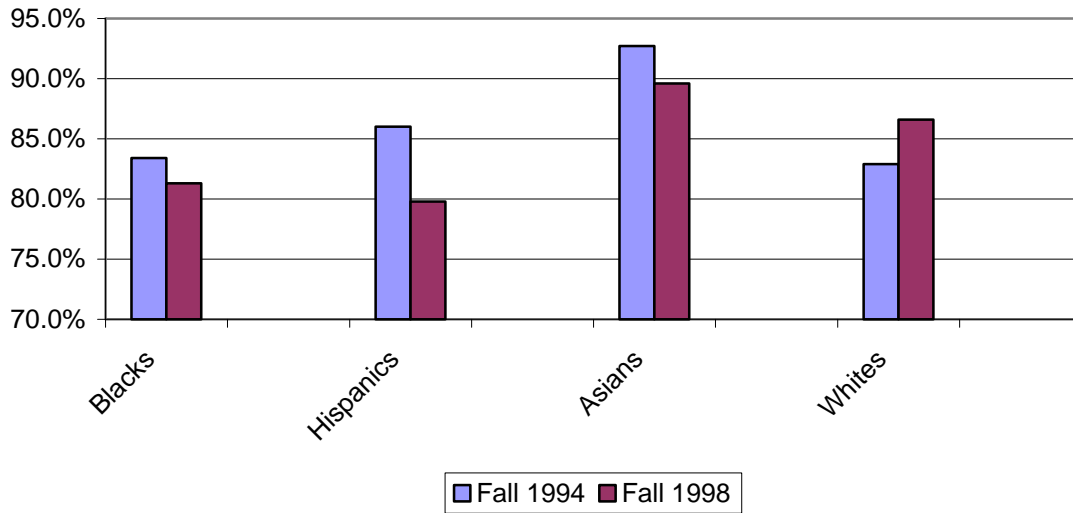
Retention

Third-semester retention is an important early measure of student success in college. In fall 1998, black and Hispanic students lagged behind white students in third-semester retention in all sectors, and Asian students outperformed all other groups. This loss of black and Hispanic students early in their college careers has significant implications for graduation rates and degree attainment as well.

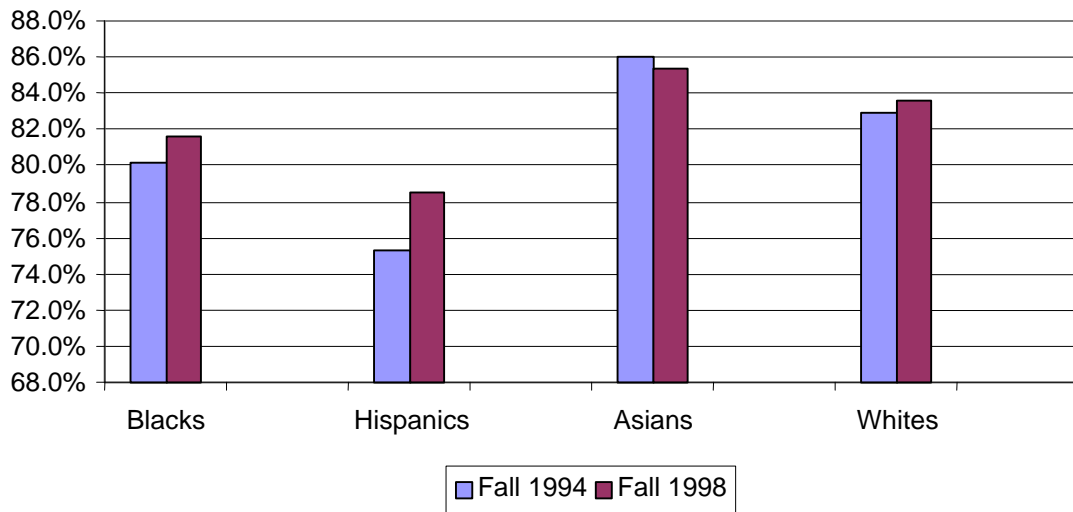
Retention rates for all minority groups enrolled in the public research universities declined from 1994 to 1998, while the retention rate for white students improved.

Conversely, black and Hispanic students enrolled at state colleges and universities and community colleges showed gains in third-semester retention from 1994 to 1998.

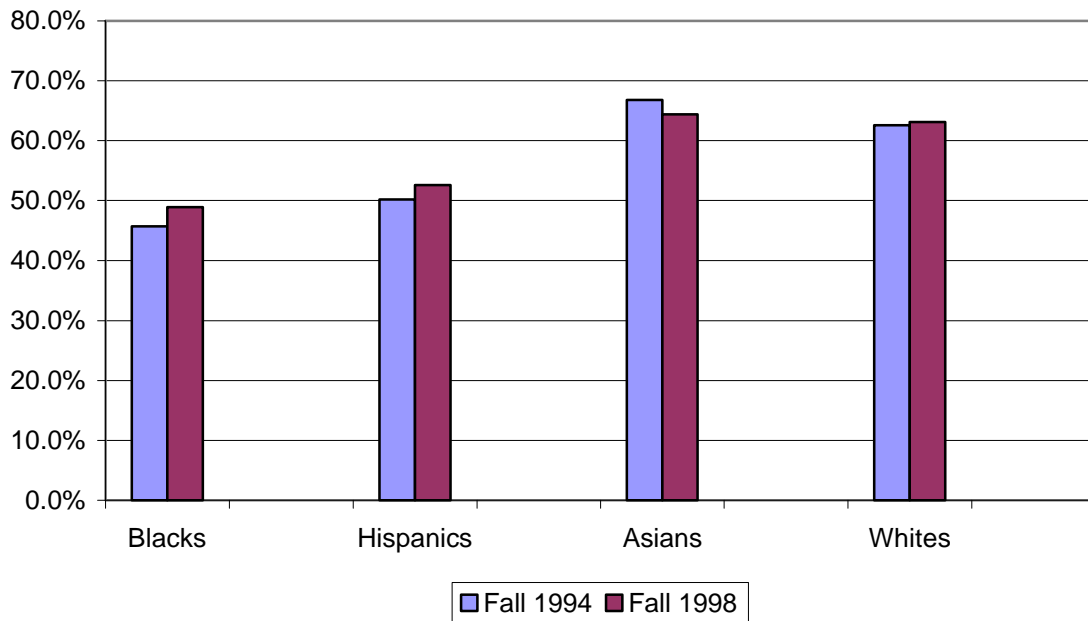
Public Research Universities - 3rd-Semester Retention



State Colleges & Universities - 3rd-Semester Retention



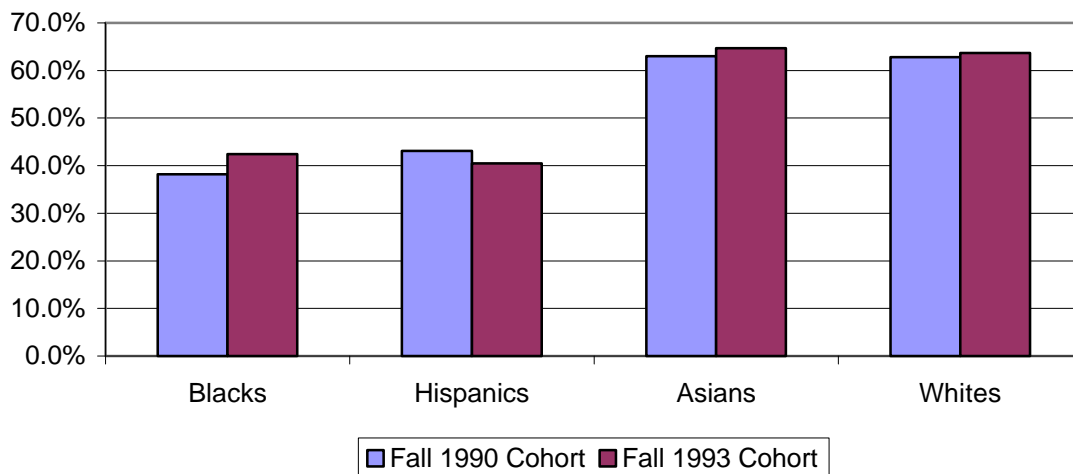
Community Colleges - 3rd-Semester Retention



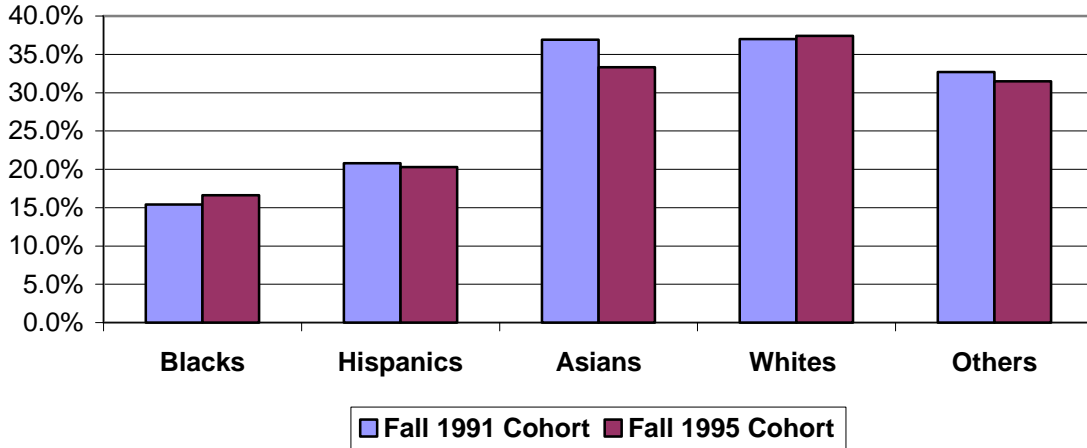
Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are an important measure of institutional success. The gap in third-semester retention between black and Hispanic students and their white and Asian counterparts widens further when graduation and/or graduation-plus-transfer rates are examined. Clearly, a significant portion of minority students who successfully completed their first year of college encountered obstacles later on. Increased state and institutional efforts are needed to help these students achieve their academic goals.

Senior Public Institutions 6-Year Cohort Graduation Rates

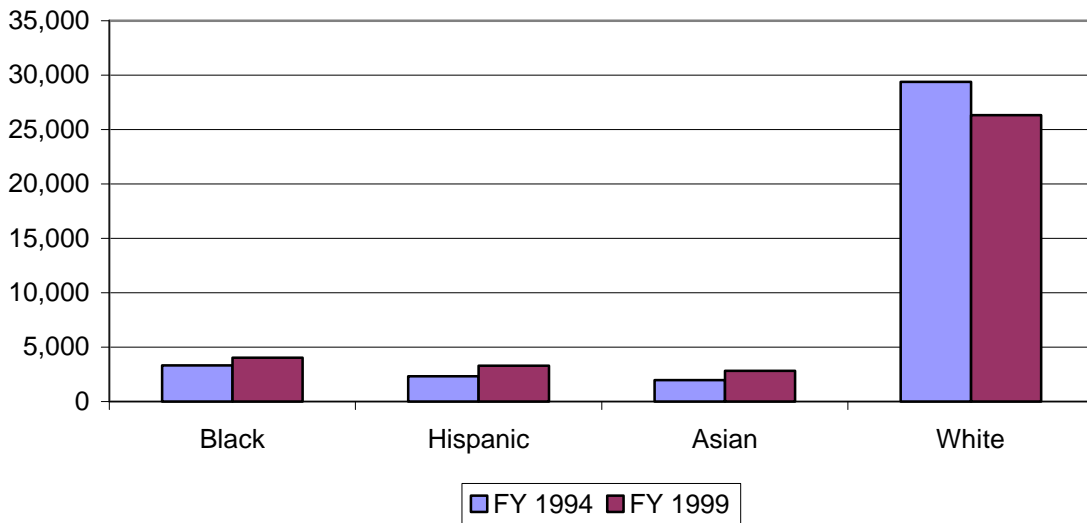


**Community Colleges
4-Year Graduation + Transfer Rates
FY 1991 and FY 1995**



Examining the number of degrees conferred across sectors further underscores the disparity in achievement between white and minority students. While black and Hispanic students make up 23 percent of the overall undergraduate enrollment and white students constitute 60 percent, white students earned roughly five times the number of undergraduate degrees.

Total Degrees Conferred

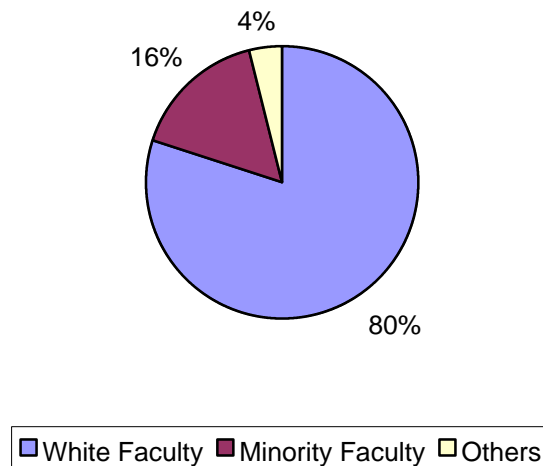


Among black students, the largest numbers of degrees were concentrated in the areas of business, social sciences, and the humanities. Hispanic students' degrees were concentrated in business, humanities, and the social sciences. Among Asian American students, there was a shift from a concentration of degrees in math/science/technology, business, and the health professions in 1994 to more degrees in the social sciences, which surpassed the health professions by 1999.

Faculty

Although gains have occurred in recent years, minorities remain underrepresented among the faculty at New Jersey colleges and universities. All students benefit from the broad point of view afforded by a diverse faculty, and minority students in particular benefit from having role models in the faculty.

Percentage of Minority Faculty - Fall 1999



Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians represented less than one-fifth of all full-time faculty in New Jersey in fall 1999, but they account for nearly 20% of all full-time, newly hired faculty members, which represents significant progress since 1995. Almost half of these new hires were female. The state colleges and universities had the largest percentage increase of newly hired black and Hispanic faculty between fall 1995 and fall 1999.

The revamped Minority Academic Career Program described on page 2 will support continued gains in numbers of minority faculty.

The Abbott School Districts

Any discussion of student diversity and minority enrollment (especially among blacks and Hispanics) must consider the state's demographic profile in preschool through grade 12 and the significant proportion of the minority students who attend school in one of the 30 Abbott Districts, so-named for the landmark Supreme Court case that redefined urban education in New Jersey.² These school districts and the New Jersey Department of Education are engaged in wide-ranging efforts to improve educational opportunities for students in preschool through grade 12, which is a long-term undertaking.

Currently, significant numbers of highly motivated, talented students do not have access to the same opportunities to learn that their peers in wealthier communities and schools districts have. However, if New Jersey's urban centers are to participate in and reap the benefits of the rapid economic and social changes that are sweeping the nation, their residents must have access to effective elementary and secondary education, as well as the varied offerings of the state's colleges and universities.

Graduates from Abbott district high schools comprise a significant proportion of the black and Hispanic students entering New Jersey's colleges and universities. During fall 1998, approximately one-third of all black and Hispanic freshmen entering the state's senior public colleges and universities graduated from a high school in an Abbott district. At the community colleges, approximately one-third of all black and one-quarter of all Hispanic full-time freshmen were from Abbott Districts. In most sectors, the third-semester retention rate for the Abbott district students is equal to or slightly less than that of their counterparts from non-Abbott districts.

Black and Hispanic Freshmen from Abbott Districts Enrolled at NJ Colleges and Universities

		<u>Black</u>			<u>Hispanic</u>		
		<u>Non-Abbott</u>	<u>Abbott</u>	<u>% from Abbott</u>	<u>Non-Abbott</u>	<u>Abbott</u>	<u>% from Abbott</u>
Senior Public Institutions	Fall 1993	818	547	40.1%	907	570	38.6%
	Fall 1998	1,027	472	31.5%	1,105	527	32.3%
Community Colleges	Fall 1993	1,387	520	27.3%	1,128	374	24.9%
	Fall 1998	1,270	587	31.6%	1,566	543	25.7%

² The Abbott districts include 30 disadvantaged urban school districts in New Jersey. The Abbott districts are: Asbury Park City, Bridgeton, Burlington City, Camden, East Orange, Elizabeth, Garfield, Gloucester City, Harrison, Hoboken, Irvington, Jersey City, Keansburg Borough, Long Branch, Millville, New Brunswick, Newark, Orange, Passaic City, Paterson, Pemberton, Perth Amboy, Phillipsburg, Pleasantville, Trenton, Union City, Vineland, West New York, Neptune, and Plainfield.

The success of efforts by school districts and the Department of Education in improving the quality of academic programs, student services, and school facilities in the Abbott districts is critical to the long-term competitiveness, quality of life, and economic vitality of the state. The three higher education programs (College Bound, GEAR UP, and EOF) that target students in the Abbott Districts and provide early intervention to enhance students' preparation, extend opportunities, and support students once enrolled in college also play an important role.

Conclusion

The data illustrate that New Jersey's colleges and universities continue to work toward building a diverse learning environment. The total enrollment of undergraduate minority students increased during the 1990s, and it is reasonable to expect that New Jersey's institutions will continue to experience annual increases in the enrollment of black, Hispanic, and Asian American students. Hispanic enrollment will grow fastest in absolute numbers, but only Asian American students will be attending college in numbers at or above their share of the traditional college-age population.

While institutions have successfully increased their numbers of minority students, they have been less successful in improving minority student persistence beyond the third semester and addressing the goal of minority student degree attainment. The data suggest some improvement in six-year graduation outcomes at the senior institutions but a slight decline in the community college four-year graduation-plus-transfer rate.

The issues of retention, transfer, and graduation are most acute for black and Hispanic students, since their primary portal of entry to New Jersey's system of higher education is at the community colleges. Strong institutional leadership is necessary to promote, plan, coordinate, and monitor institutional efforts to increase minority retention, transfer, and graduation rates. In this regard, enhanced cooperation is necessary between the community colleges and the four-year institutions to improve minority student transfer rates. While the advent of the ARTSYS system will be of assistance, ARTSYS will only be as effective as the communications that occur among the faculty of the two- and four-year institutions. A continuing faculty dialogue is necessary to ensure that the courses offered at the two-year colleges will meet the prerequisites for majors offered at the four-year colleges and universities.

The Commission's 1997 Incentive Grants to Improve Graduation and Transfer Rates for Minority or Low-Income Students supported programs designed to improve graduation and transfer rates at ten institutions. In order to participate in a long-term evaluation, each participating institution committed to continuing the program beyond the term of the grant award. Commission staff, working with an external consultant, will report in 2001 on both quantitative and qualitative outcomes, providing information that may be of

assistance in future state and institutional efforts to improve educational achievement among minority and low-income students.

Regarding faculty diversity, institutional efforts to increase minority representation among their full-time faculty have met with some success in New Jersey. The increase in the number of newly hired minority faculty showed steady gains between fall 1995 and fall 1999, and the Commission's new Minority Academic Career Program, if fully utilized by the institutions, can help diminish the dearth of minority faculty members.

Tracking progress in increasing student and faculty diversity over time provides important information to guide institutions and the state in developing and implementing targeted efforts to support diverse learning environments and successful student outcomes for all racial groups. Given the importance of ensuring that all New Jerseyans have an opportunity to participate in economic prosperity and recognizing the need for an advanced education to do so, the Commission on Higher Education should discuss and provide information annually on the status of campus racial diversity.