

DATA BRIEF

Bachelor's Degrees Awarded To Racial/ Ethnic Minorities In Science And Engi- neering Increase From 1990-94

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The gaps once found in the choice of major between underrepresented minorities and whites have virtually disappeared.

The number of bachelor's degrees in science and engineering (S&E) fields awarded to underrepresented minority students showed robust growth in the early 1990s, after a period of relatively slow growth from 1985 to 1990. From 1990 to 1994, the number of baccalaureate recipients with degrees in S&E increased 44 percent for blacks, 47 percent for Hispanics, and 58 percent for American Indians. The percentage increases for underrepresented minority groups were higher than the percentage increases among white recipients (10 percent) and Asian recipients (36 percent) (table A).

Table A. Science and engineering bachelor's degrees, by race/ethnicity of recipients: percentage change, 1985-90 and 1990-94

Race/ethnicity	1985-90	1990-94
White, non-Hispanics	-4%	10%
Asians or Pacific Islanders	46	36
Underrepresented minorities, total	10	46
Black, non-Hispanics	7	44
Hispanics	16	47
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	-8	58

SOURCE: NSF/SRS tabulations of National Center for Education Statistics Completions Survey data

In 1994 there were similar numbers of black bachelor's degree recipients in S&E (26,289) and Asian recipients (26,420). The number of Hispanics earning bachelor's degrees in S&E fields hit an all-time high of 20,529, as did American Indians at 2,004. Even with this growth in degree awards, baccalaureates earned by underrepresented minorities accounted for only 12 percent of

the total S&E degrees in 1994, yet these groups comprised 28 percent of the college-age population (18-24 year olds).

Among underrepresented minority student groups, the increases in baccalaureate degrees varied by S&E field. From 1990 to 1994, the percentage increases in baccalaureates awarded to underrepresented groups ranged from a 6-percent increase in computer science degrees to an increase of 67 percent in psychology degrees (chart A). The increase in the number of degree awards to underrepresented minorities from 1990 to 1994 was greatest in the broad field of social sciences. These fields had slightly higher concentrations of S&E bachelor's degree recipients among underrepresented minorities (59 percent), than among whites (54 percent). Among S&E baccalaureate recipients in 1994, a lower percent of underrepresented minorities majored in engineering (12 percent) and the natural sciences (29 percent) than did whites (15 percent and 31 percent) (table B). Although these slight differences exist, the gaps once found in the choice of major between underrepresented minorities and whites have virtually disappeared.

Table B. Percentage distribution of S&E bachelor's degree recipients, by broad field for race/ethnicity groups: 1994

Race/ethnicity	Engi- neering	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
Underrepresented minorities	12	29	59
Whites	15	31	54
Asians	25	39	36

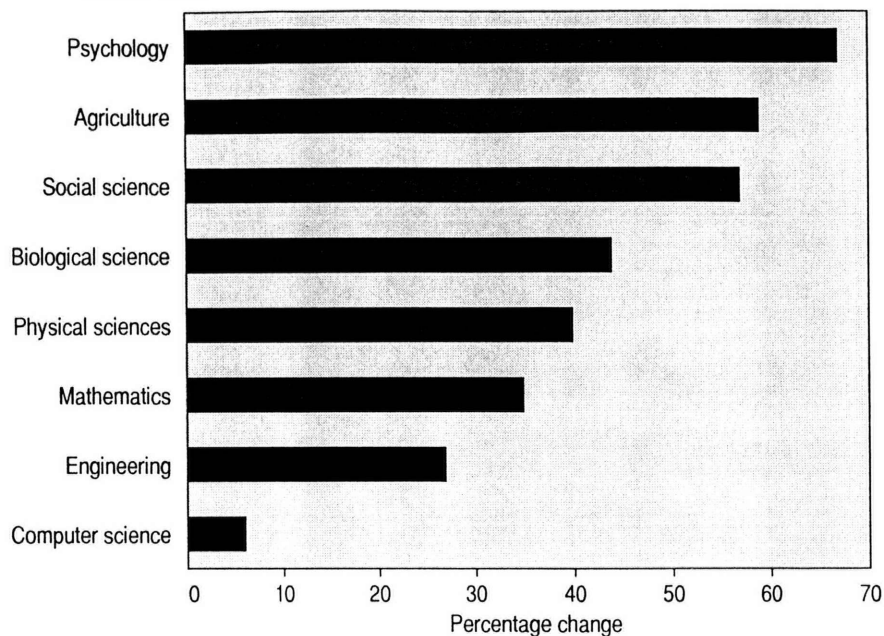
SOURCE: NSF/SRS tabulations of National Center for Education Statistics Completions data.

Electronic Dissemination

SRS data are available through the World Wide Web (<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/stats.htm>) and also through STIS, NSF's online Science and Technology Information System, described in NSF flyer 95-64, "Getting NSF Information and Publications." For a paper copy of the flyer, call 703-306-1130. For an electronic copy of the *STIS User's Guide*, send an e-mail with the phrase "get NSF9410.TXT" to stisserv@nsf.gov. For NSF's Telephonic Device for the Deaf, dial 703-306-0090.

The data presented here are taken from the forthcoming NSF report *Science and Engineering Degrees, by Race/Ethnicity of Recipients: 1987-94*, Detailed Statistical Tables. The report includes additional data on numerous S&E fields by bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. The data in the report are derived from two Federal agencies. The bachelor's and master's degree data are from the Department of Education's Completion Survey of all universities and colleges. The doctorate data are from the Survey of Earned Doctorates, which is conducted among all individuals earning a research doctorate. Both the report and this data brief were prepared by Susan T. Hill, Division of Science Resources Studies, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 965, Arlington, VA. 22230. For a free copy of either, write to the above address, call (703) 306-1773, or e-mail SRS at srspubs@nsf.gov.

Chart A. Science and engineering degrees awarded to underrepresented minorities, by field: percentage change, 1990-94



SOURCE: NSF/SRS tabulations of National Center for Education Statistics Completions Survey data

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