

Pell Institute Fact Sheet
Updated: 12/14/2011

**6-YEAR DEGREE ATTAINMENT RATES FOR STUDENTS
 ENROLLED IN A POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION**

Background/History

There are many positive outcomes associated with graduating from college, including higher income and rates of employment. This fact sheet examines the 6-year degree attainment rates **for students that enrolled in any postsecondary institution** in Fall 2003. The graduation rates are disaggregated by the following four categories:

- Pell Grant receipt,
- First-generation and low-income status,
- Family income, and
- Family income as a percent of the Federal poverty threshold.

Overall, Only 30.6% of students enrolled in postsecondary education earned a bachelor's degree within 6 years. 18.7% of these students earned an associate's degree or other credentials, 15.0% were still enrolled and did not yet earn a degree, and 35.6% left school without a degree and did not return.

Disaggregation of the data, however, reveals an even more disturbing picture. Each of the four charts below shows significant gaps in graduation rates by income. According to the data below, students from low-income families are less likely to earn a bachelor's degree within six years, compared to their more financially affluent peers.

Data Source: 2003/04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, (BPS:04/09)

Bachelor's degree completion rates by Pell grant status				
	Attained bachelor's degree	Attained associate's degree or other credentials	Still enrolled	Dropped out
Received Pell grant	19.5	25.4	15.4	39.7
Did not receive Pell grant	36.8	15.0	14.9	33.3

- The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate to promote access to postsecondary education.

Bachelor's degree completion rates by first-generation and low-income status				
	Attained bachelor's degree	Attained associate's degree or other credentials	Still enrolled	Dropped out
Low-income, first-generation	10.9	26.1	16.1	46.8
Low-income, not first-generation	24.1	18.8	16.5	40.6
First-generation, not low-income	24.9	21.8	15.5	37.9
Not low income and not first-generation	54.0	9.3	13.4	23.3

- Low-income is defined as the student's family income falling at or below \$25,000. First-generation is defined as students who come from families where neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Bachelor's degree completion rates for by parental income

	Attained bachelor's degree	Attained associate's degree or other credentials	Still enrolled	Dropped out
\$0-\$29,999	16.3	23.3	16.0	44.4
\$30,000-\$59,999	29.0	20.2	16.7	34.1
\$60,000-\$99,999	43.7	13.7	13.3	29.3
\$100,000 and above	57.7	9.8	11.6	20.8

Bachelor's degree completion rates by family income as a percent of the Federal poverty threshold

	Attained bachelor's degree	Attained associate's degree or other credentials	Still enrolled	Dropped out
Less than 150%	14.5	24.4	16.3	44.9
151 to 200%	23.3	22.4	15.7	38.6
201% to 300%	29.4	19.7	15.2	35.8
301% and above	44.6	13.3	13.9	28.1

- According to the U.S Census Bureau, the poverty threshold for 2003 was \$ 18,660 for a two-adult, two-child family. A family is considered at the poverty threshold when its total income (before taxes and not including public housing, Medicaid, or food stamps) is less than the family's threshold. The official poverty threshold does not vary geographically and is updated annually for inflation.
- 150% of poverty is the eligibility cutoff for TRIO participation