

Trends in Undergraduate Enrollment in Higher Ed. in the West by Race and Ethnicity, 1980 to 1990

The nation's colleges and universities are more racially and ethnically diverse now than at any time in their history. While the total number of undergraduates increased only 28 percent between 1980 and 1990, the number of non-white and Latino undergraduates increased close to 50 percent. Consequently, non-whites and Latinos increased from 17 percent of the nation's undergraduates in 1980 to 20 percent in 1990.

Undergraduate enrollment in the 15 WICHE Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education states is the most racially diverse in the nation. In 1990, more than one-fourth (25.9 percent) of the students enrolled in colleges in the WICHE region were non-white or Latino compared with 23.12 percent in the South/Southcentral, 18.6 percent in the Northeast, and 13.1 percent in the Northcentral region. The Northeast enrolls the largest percent of international students (2.6 percent), followed by the WICHE states (2.5 percent), South/Southcentral (1.4 percent), and Northcentral (1.3 percent) states.

WICHE Trends 1980 to 1990

Undergraduate enrollment in the WICHE states increased 27 percent between 1980 and 1990. The number of Asian/Pacific Islander undergraduates increased the most (86 percent). While White non-Latino undergraduates in the WICHE states increased just 20 percent between 1980 and 1990, the number of Latino graduates increased 63 percent, and American Indian/Alaskan Native undergraduates 38 percent. The number of African-American undergraduates decreased in the mid-1980's, then increased slowly to end the decade within 1 percent of where they began in 1980.

As a consequence, the racial and ethnic make-up of the undergraduate population has changed. While White non-Latinos made-up 76 percent of the region's undergraduates in 1980, they were only 71.5 percent in 1990. African-Americans declined from 6 percent in 1980 to 4.8 percent of undergraduates in 1990. Latinos increased from 8 percent to 10.2 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders from 6.2 percent to 9.1 percent of undergraduates between 1980 and 1990. The portion of American Indians/Alaskan Natives remained constant at around 1.8 percent of the undergraduates.

Hawaii had the largest percent of non-White/Latino undergraduates in 1990 (66 percent),

followed by New Mexico (39 percent), California (34 percent), Arizona (20.6 percent), and Alaska (17.6 percent). Idaho enrolls the smallest percent of non-White/Latino undergraduates (4.9 percent). The proportion of non-White/Latino undergraduates to all undergraduates changed the most in California (from 27.7 percent to 34 percent). In contrast, between 1980 and 1990 the number of White non-Latino undergraduates in

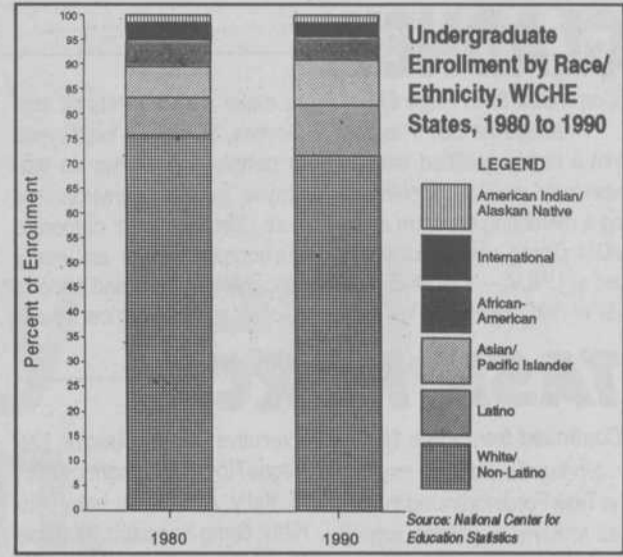
Hawaii increased faster (44 percent) than the number of non-White/Latino undergraduates (14.3 percent), resulting in a decline in the proportion of non-Whites and Latinos from 71.4 percent to 66 percent.

The number of non-White and Latino undergraduates increased more than 50 percent in the WICHE states between 1980 and 1990. Some states in the region experienced even more dramatic increases. non-White

and Latino undergraduates increased more than 150 percent between 1980 and 1990 in Alaska, Nevada, and Wyoming. New Mexico and California, which already have large non-White/Latino undergraduate populations, also experienced significant increases during this period (102 percent and 42 percent, respectively).

These increases are fueled by demographic changes, rather

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