

Washington State College Enrollment Study

Class of 2007: College Enrollment in the First Year after Graduation Statewide Results

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March 2009



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Introduction

For over 10 years, the state has been tracking the outcomes of a sample of graduates as they leave public high school in Washington and enter college and the workplace. These results from the Graduate Follow-up Study (GFS) have been valuable to the state and to districts who seek information about their graduates' post-high school performance.¹ However, the generalizability of GFS results has long been unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, it uses a non-random sample of graduates, and second, it is limited in its coverage of outcomes, both regionally and in omitting many private colleges. In an effort to reduce these uncertainties, an alternative source for higher education enrollment information, results from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data matches have been published for the past five years.

This report, Washington's College Enrollment Study, uses data from both the NSC and the GFS to measure the rate at which high school graduates of the Class of 2007 continued into higher education.

Results from the NSC are different from the GFS in four important ways:

1. ***The Graduates:*** The NSC match process includes all high school graduates, rather than the sample of approximately 60% of graduates who are included in the GFS.
2. ***The Colleges & Universities:*** NSC data covers 90% of all higher education enrollments at both public and private institutions in all 50 states, whereas the GFS focuses primarily on public colleges in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.
3. ***The Apprenticeship & Private Two-Year Programs:*** NSC does not include most of the apprenticeship programs in Washington. These programs are included in the GFS.
4. ***Employment Data:*** The NSC data does not include information about graduates' employment. The GFS study suggests in general 80% of high school graduates work in the first year after graduation. The GFS provides information about graduates' wage rates and industries of employment.

The College Enrollment Study is conducted for the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) by the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University, with the cooperation of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and Washington's public baccalaureate colleges and universities.

For additional information about this report, and for information about how districts can order local reports, please see <http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/nsc/>.

¹ See <http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/gfs> for Graduate Follow-up Study reports.

Procedures and Definitions

The College Enrollment Study for the graduating class of 2007 searched for college enrollments by 65,219 public high school students who, during the 2006-2007 school year:

- graduated from a public high school,
- passed a General Educational Development (GED) exam,
- completed an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), or
- received an Adult Diploma.

This represents nearly all of the graduating public school class of 2007 in Washington. The graduates were matched electronically with records at the NSC. College and university enrollments between July 2007 and June 2008 were tabulated.

Earlier reports using NSC data have discussed the under-reporting of students at Washington's public colleges. Most notably, reported enrollments at public technical colleges in Washington by the NSC have not matched the students identified by Washington's State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

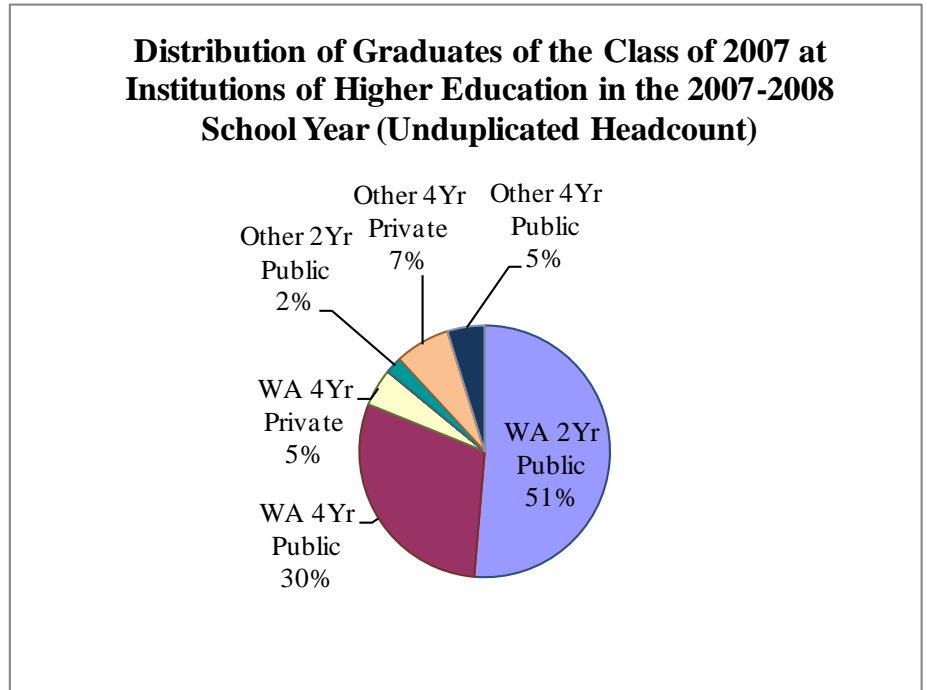
This is the second year that the College Enrollment Study has incorporated GFS-matched data on *all* students based on a name/date of birth matching protocol developed by SBCTC researchers. The previous method relied upon using a sub-population of students to *estimate* NSC under-counts.

A student is counted as "Enrolled" if he/she took at least one class between July 2007 and June 2008. An enrolled student did not necessarily take a "full load" of classes or enroll in more than one quarter or semester at an institution.

Some graduates enrolled at multiple institutions in the first year after graduation. Since NSC does not provide data on credits earned or otherwise identify where the student took a majority of classes, these students are counted as a partial "enrollment" at each school. In this way, students attending two institutions are not double-counted in the final unduplicated count. For example, a student who enrolled at North Seattle Community College, Seattle Central Community College and the University of Washington is counted as one-third of an enrollment at each institution. In cumulative statistics, the student is counted as one-third of an enrollment in a four-year university and two-thirds of an enrollment at a two-year college.

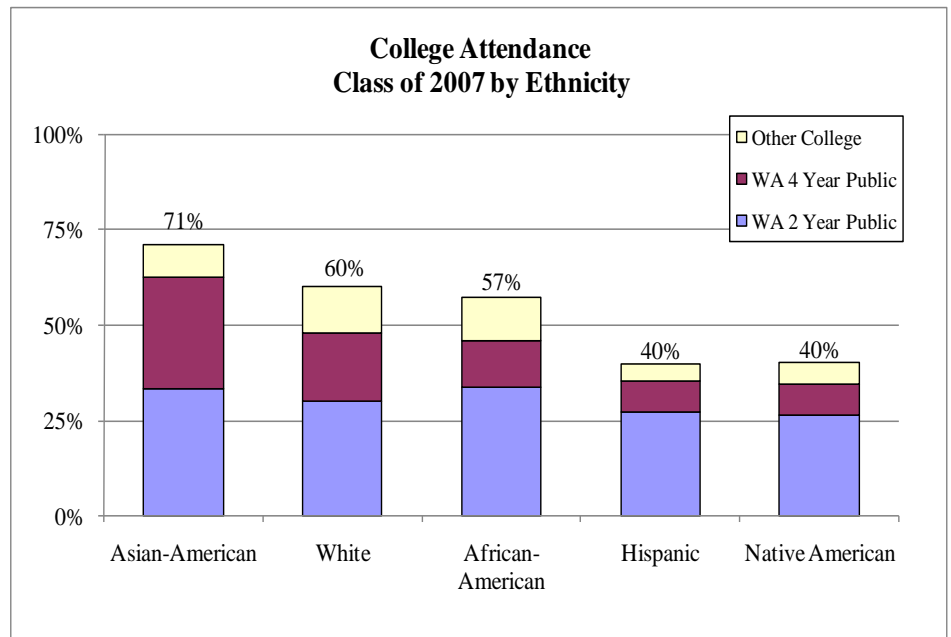
College Enrollment Study Results

The analysis shows that 59% of the class of 2007 attended college in the first year after graduation. Eighty-six percent of the college students stayed in Washington, and 14% attended colleges elsewhere. Half attended a public two-year college in Washington (51%). Only 12% attended a private institution. (The distribution across different types of institutions can be seen in the adjoining figure.)



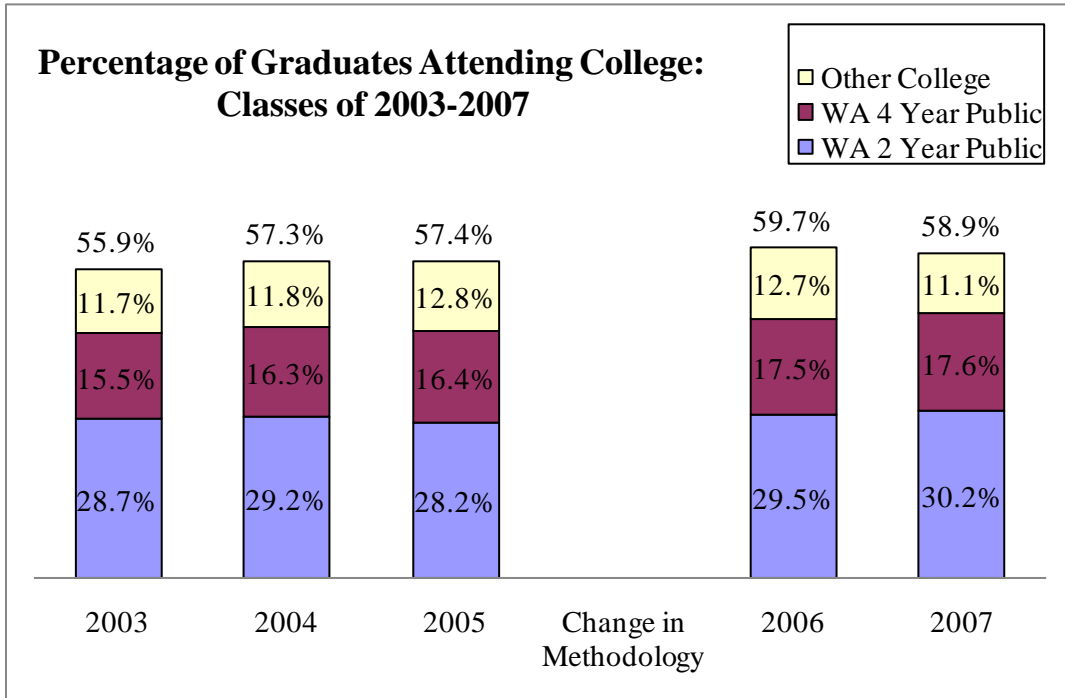
College and university enrollments varied by gender and ethnicity. Females were more likely to attend college than males, by seven percentage points. While enrollments in Washington State's two-year programs were comparable for most ethnic groups, enrollments at Washington's public four-year universities were much higher for Asian-American graduates (29%) than for other ethnicities.²

Overall, college enrollment in the first year after high school graduation has remained relatively consistent for the past five years. The classes of 2003 through 2005 had enrollment rates of between 56 and 57 percent. There was a small increase in the enrollment rates starting



² For additional detail on student enrollments, please see the Microsoft Excel workbook that can be downloaded from our website at www.sesrc.wsu.edu/nsc/.

with the class of 2006, due to a change in methodology.³ The college enrollment rates were 60 percent in 2006 and 59 percent in 2007.



³ See Procedures and Definitions section for further information about the change in matching procedures.