

**Research Report
No. 05-3**

**Washington State Board for Community and
Technical Colleges**

**ACCESS AND SUCCESS FOR SYSTEM GOALS
FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR IN
WASHINGTON COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES:
PROGRESS REPORT**

December 2005

Washington State continues to grow more racially and ethnically diverse. The state's population of color (non-white and Latino/Hispanic) increased from 13 percent in the 1990 census to an estimated 22.4 percent in 2004, according to the Office of Financial Management (OFM). Census 2000 reports that 10.4 percent (16,500) of the state's citizens were immigrants. Of those, more than one in every four (26.4 percent) were recent newcomers to Washington, having arrived between 1995 and 2000. The number of non-English speaking persons 18 and over doubled in the period from 1990 to 2000, from about 117,000 to more than 261,000.

These population changes are transforming the makeup of Washington's workforce. Labor force growth rates for people of color are expected to be considerably higher than for whites, according to OFM's 2004 long-term labor forecast. In 1980, people of color made up 6.2 percent of the labor force. By 2000 that percentage nearly doubled to 12.2 percent. From 2000 to 2030, OFM projects that the number of people of color in the labor force will grow at a rate of 2.1 percent annually, more than twice the projected 0.9 percent annual growth for the white labor force. This increase reflects population trends, with the percent of people of color, locally and nationally, expected to grow faster during this period of time than the white population. Latinos/Hispanics are the fastest growing segment of the population. Between 2000 and 2030, the number of workers of Latino/Hispanic origin will increase from 235,000 to 552,000, thus comprising 13 percent of the workforce.



For Information on the Diversity Goal Contact:
Nani Jackins Park, Director, Student Services
Phone: 360-704-4305; Email: njackinspark@sbctc.ctc.edu

For Information on Indicators Contact:
David Prince, Manager, Research & Analysis
Phone: 360-704-4347; Email: dprince@sbctc.ctc.edu
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
P O Box 42495, Olympia WA 98504-2495
TDD 360-753-3680

According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2004), Washington State would realize an estimated \$3.9 billion increase in total personal income and \$1.4 billion in additional tax revenues if all ethnic groups experienced the same educational attainment and earnings as whites. This underscores the need to successfully address the attainment gap that persists for students of color, as compared to their white counterparts. In 2000, 23 percent of Washington's white population ages 25-64 held bachelor's degrees or higher, compared to 10.8 percent of the state's Hispanic population. Nearly 21 percent (20.8) of Black/African Americans and 13.3 percent of American Indians/Alaskan Natives from the same age group held bachelor's degrees (Census 2000).

These statistics are reflective of attainment disparities nationally, with Census 2000 reporting 30 percent of non-Hispanic whites age 25 and over held bachelor's degrees, while only 17 percent of Black/African Americans and 11 percent of Latinos/Hispanics held the same credential. The low educational attainment of foreign-born Latinos/Hispanics, who compose more than 50 percent of the Latino/Hispanic population, contributes to the low attainment levels of the overall Latino/Hispanic population. Ten percent of foreign-born Latinos/Hispanics attained a bachelor's degree, while 14 percent of the native population attained theirs (Census 2000).

Colleges and universities have achieved a measure of success increasing participation rates for students of color. Access rates for Black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American students are at or above parity with Washington's population, and rates for Latinos/Hispanics are steadily improving towards parity.

Educational outcomes for students of color, however, continue to lag behind those of their white counterparts. As addressed in greater detail in later sections of this report, with regard to adult basic education progress, transition rates and completion rates for workforce, academic transfer degree and certificate programs, a gap in attainment for Black/African American, Native American and Latino/Hispanic students persists. It is also important to note that Pacific Islander students, whose performance outcomes are often masked by their inclusion in the broader Asian student category, also experience significant barriers to educational attainment as evidenced by their low completion rates.

Community and technical colleges serve as major entryways into the educational pipeline for students of color and students from other traditionally under-represented populations, and are well positioned to play a major role in bridging the attainment gap. In May of 1993 the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) adopted goals related to the success and participation of people of color. Since that time, staff members have provided periodic progress reports on these original goals and their related indicators. This progress report follows in that tradition. The indicators in this report are designed to monitor progress related to the system's diversity goal, which states: "Community and technical college programs will serve as the key point of entry into higher education for tens of thousands of people of color and new immigrants to Washington State."

This report is designed to provide information for readers, promote discussion, and set the stage for future initiatives to address outcomes for people of color. The data provided speaks to the success that Washington's community and technical colleges have achieved in increasing higher education access and participation for students of color. It also reveals work to be done to improve student of color attainment and transition rates across the system. These challenges

offer an important opportunity to work in innovative ways to support more successful outcomes for students of color.

Summary of Findings

A review of the indicators suggest colleges are providing equitable access to the two-year system for students of color in general. Defining parity as the ratio of the incidence of students of color in college divided by their incidence in the general population, students of color are substantially above parity as their educational participation rates grow faster than state population growth rates.

Enrollment in college-level courses is also above parity for all groups except Latinos/Hispanics, but for these students too the news related to participation rates is promising, with the percent who are enrolling at college level increasing faster than state population growth.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is the largest single entry point into community colleges for students of color and non-English speakers, most of whom attend as adults for employment-related reasons. Under preparation is a concern for younger students of color who have recently graduated from high school. They are somewhat less likely than white students to be college ready when they arrive, enrolling at slightly higher rates in pre-college coursework.

Within workforce education, results for students overall are promising. About eight out of 10 workforce students who progress beyond one quarter (15 credits) of training will eventually exit deemed “prepared for work,” with little difference in outcomes between any student groups. However on the margins, Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American and Native American students are a little more likely to leave early (with fewer than 15 credits), and when they progress beyond the 15 credit mark, they are still a little less likely to complete credentials or longer training.

Outcome indicators in other areas are less promising as well. Progress rates in ABE are lower for Latinos/Hispanics and Native American students than for other students. Too many students stop out after ABE coursework and do not transition into college-level programs. As noted earlier, this is particularly challenging given changing state demographics and the projected economic impacts related to increased numbers who lack the education and training needed to support family wage employment.

Fewer Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic and Native American students who start out exploring transfer options end up solidly on the pathway, and their rates for becoming transfer-ready are lower than for white and Asian/Pacific Islander students.

Finally, except in limited areas, faculty and staff are less diverse than the state population, and Washington’s employment of diverse faculty and staff is below the national average of 19.3 percent.

Table I
SUMMARY OF GOALS AND INDICATORS

Goal	Indicator	Status
Enrollment Diversity	A. Ratio of percentage of students of color to percentage of population of color (all ages).	Overall access rates are high for all.
	B. Ratio of percent of college-level students of color to percent of people of color.	Access rates at or above parity for Black/African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans; access rate improving steadily for Latino/Hispanic students with participation rate higher than population growth rate.
	C. College readiness for students of color entering straight from high school.	Black/African American and Latino/Hispanic students straight from high school enroll in developmental classes at higher rates than white recent high school graduates. More to be done on improving college readiness of younger students of color.
Student Success	A. Adult Basic Education progress rate.	More to be done on improving basic skills progress rates overall, but in particular for Latino/Hispanic and Native American students who are progressing at lower rates than white students.
	B. Adult Basic Education transition rate.	Latino/Hispanic transition at lower rates than other adult basic education students.
	C. Preparedness for Transfer	Among students who enroll to explore college transfer, Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic and Native American students are less likely than white and Asian/Pacific Islanders to go beyond incidental exploration and solidly start down the pathway. Those Black /African American, Latino/Hispanic and Native American students who do start down the pathway remain less likely to become transfer-ready by the time they leave.
	D. Preparedness for Work	Students of color are deemed “prepared for work” at about the same rate as all students, although a slightly larger percentage of Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic and Native American students leave early having earned fewer than 15 vocational credits. Of those who go beyond, slightly fewer earn credentials or complete longer training.
Employment Diversity	A. Percent of college staff of color compared to state population of color and students of color.	Faculty and administrators are less diverse than state population and students of color. Classified staff is as diverse as the state population. Exempt professionals of color, led by student services professionals, have increased at a faster rate than the targeted state population of color.

PART 1: ENROLLMENT DIVERSITY

Goal I: The makeup of the colleges' student bodies and staffs will reflect the diversity of the population in the communities they serve.

Indicator A: Access ratio - All Students. The access ratio is the **percent** of all state supported students to percent of population by race and ethnic group.

Indicator B: Access Ratio- College Level. The college level access ratio is the percent of all state supported workforce training and transfer-oriented students enrolled in college-level classes to percent of population by race and ethnic group.

Indicator C: College Readiness -Students Straight from High School. College readiness is the percent of new college students in the target populations taking at least one developmental education course compared to the percentage of white students.

Enrollment, All Students: Table II shows that colleges enroll students of color, of all ages, at high rates. The overall campus enrollment is more diverse than the total population. Continued increase in students of color enrollments mark the last five years, such that in fall 2004, students of color comprised nearly 30 percent of all state-supported students, compared to a 23 percent state population of color. SBCTC changed race coding in 2003 to allow students to indicate more than one race, which is the dynamic behind much of each subset's percentage changes from 2003 to 2004. Over time more data related to specific race and ethnicity categories will be available.

Table II
Students by Race and Ethnic Background, All State Supported
Fall Quarter

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	% Change from 2003
White	122,971	122,789	125,864	123,876	116,533	-5.9%
Black/African American	7,746	8,225	8,622	8,799	8,250	-6.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	15,189	15,682	16,573	16,720	15,357	-8.2%
Latino/Hispanic	14,561	15,907	16,485	18,143	17,403	-4.1%
Native American	3,295	3,277	3,276	3,021	2,805	-7.1%
Other Race	3,341	3,221	3,401	3,394	3,030	-10.7%
Multi-Racial	N/A	N/A	N/A	444	2,116	N/A
Total reporting, excluding International Students and those not reporting race or ethnic background	167,103	169,101	174,221	174,397	165,494	-5.1%
Students of Color	44,132	46,312	48,357	50,521	48,961	-3.1%
% Students of Color	26.1%	27.4%	27.8%	29.0%	29.6%	
State Population % People of Color	19.2%	20.6%	22.1%	22.2%	22.4%	
Not Reporting Race or Ethnic Background	14,408	13,578	16,149	15,816	16,132	2.0%
International Students	404	322	278	272	351	29.0%

Source: SBCTC Fall Report 2004 - data warehouse and OFM State Population data percent People of Color.

Table III shows the percentage of students compared to the percentage of the population expressed as a ratio. If the percentages were equal, then the ratio would be 1.0 (parity). The college population has grown more diverse.

Table III
Access Ratio, All State Supported Students
Fall Quarter

	----- 2004 -----		
	% of Total Students	% of Total State Population	Access Ratio (1.00 is Parity)
White	70.4%	77.6%	0.9
African American	5.0%	3.5%	1.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	9.3%	6.5%	1.5
Latino/Hispanic	10.5%	8.5%	1.3
Native American	1.7%	1.7%	1.1
Other/Multiple	3.1%	3.0%	1.1

Source: SBCTC Data Warehouse and OFM population data (adds to more than 100% due to rounding).

The group of Asian/Pacific Islander students enrolled in the colleges had many different ethnic backgrounds. Data show that the largest enrollments were students with Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean and Japanese backgrounds. Asian Indians, Cambodians and Laotians were among the largest “other Asians,” with several hundred students from each group. About a quarter of all Asian/Pacific Islander students (27 percent) recently immigrated to the United States.

Table IV
Asian/Pacific Islanders
State Supported, Fall

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2003 to 2004 % Change
Vietnamese (619)	2,968	2,906	3,104	3,000	2,736	-9%
Filipino (608)	2,669	2,781	2,864	3,046	2,954	-3%
Chinese (605)	2,261	2,306	2,352	2,331	2,215	-5%
Korean (612)	2,281	2,368	2,363	2,166	2,092	-3%
Japanese (611)	880	970	1,043	1,089	1,113	2%
Other Asians/Pacific Islanders	4,130	4,351	4,847	5,088	4,247	-17%
Total	15,189	15,682	16,573	16,720	15,357	-8%

Note: Excludes international students.

Source: SBCTC data warehouse where Ethnic = 1 and Census Race = codes in ().

Enrollment, College-Level Workforce and Transfer Programs: Table IV shows access ratios within college level programs only. Black/African American, Native American, Asian American and other/multi-racial students of color all are enrolled in college level programs at ratios equal to or higher than parity. Latino/Hispanic students are near parity.

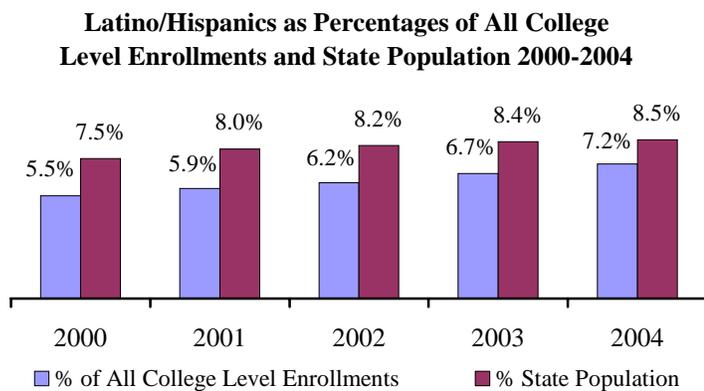
Table V
Ratio of Percent College-Level Students of Color to Percent State Population (Access Ratio)
Fall 2004

	----- College-Level -----			% of College Level	Washington Population (2004)	Access Ratio (1.00 is parity)
	Workforce	Transfer	All			
African American	2,947	2,880	5,827	4.8%	3.5%	1.37
Native American	1,059	990	2,049	1.7%	1.7%	1.00
Asian American	4,305	5,868	10,173	8.4%	6.5%	1.29
Latino/Hispanic	4,113	4,540	8,653	7.2%	8.5%	0.85
Other/Multiple	2,379	1,639	4,018	3.1%	3.0%	1.10
Total of Color	13,988	16,652	30,640	25.4%	22.4%	1.13

Source: SBCTC Data Warehouse (Kind of Student T or W, not exclusively enrolled in basic skills) and OFM State Population data % People of Color.

Latino/Hispanic Students Closing Parity Gap for College Level Enrollments: The college-level enrollment rate for Latinos/Hispanics, while below parity, has been increasing faster than the rate of growth in state population. The graph shows Latinos/Hispanics as a percentage of all college level students and as a percentage of the state population

for the last five years. From fall 2000 to fall 2005, Latinos/Hispanics as a percent of college-level enrollments increased 31.5 percent from 5.5 percent to 7.2 percent. During this same period, they increased 13 percent as a share of state population - from 7.5 percent to 8.5 percent. This brought Latino/Hispanic students 12 points closer to parity in the 5 year period - from 0.73 to 0.85.

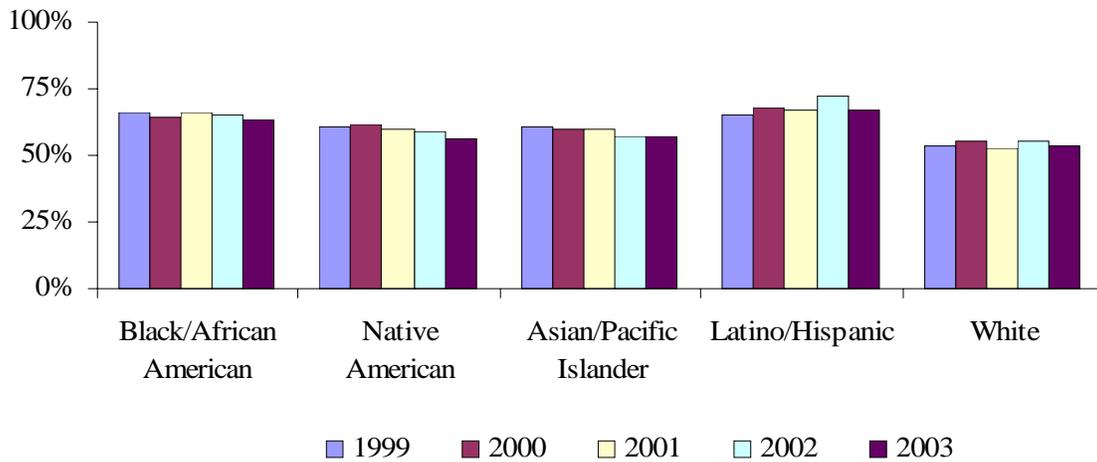


College Readiness for Students of Color Entering Directly from High School: New students are regarded as “college ready” if they have completed intermediate algebra in high school and can demonstrate readiness on college English and math placement exams. Typically, the requirements for college readiness exceed high school graduation requirements. Pre-college courses are a prerequisite to college-level courses and do not count toward degree requirements. There are a number of cost-related impacts of increased pre-college education needs: instruction and tuition costs, as well as increased time-to-completion and associated costs to students.

Fifty-five percent of high school graduates take at least one pre-college (remedial) class in math, reading or writing. The rate is highest for Latino/Hispanic (67 percent) and Black/African American students (63 percent).

See *Pre College (Remedial) Course Taking by Recent High School Graduates Who Attend Washington Community and Technical Colleges - System Summary Updated for High School Graduates Enrolled in 2003-04* at: <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/data/rsrchrpts/Resh04-1.doc>.

**Percent of Students Straight from High School
Less Than College Ready to Start**



Part II: STUDENT SUCCESS

Goal II: Advising and counseling services will meet the unique needs of students of color and immigrants, many of whom face difficult economic and language barriers.

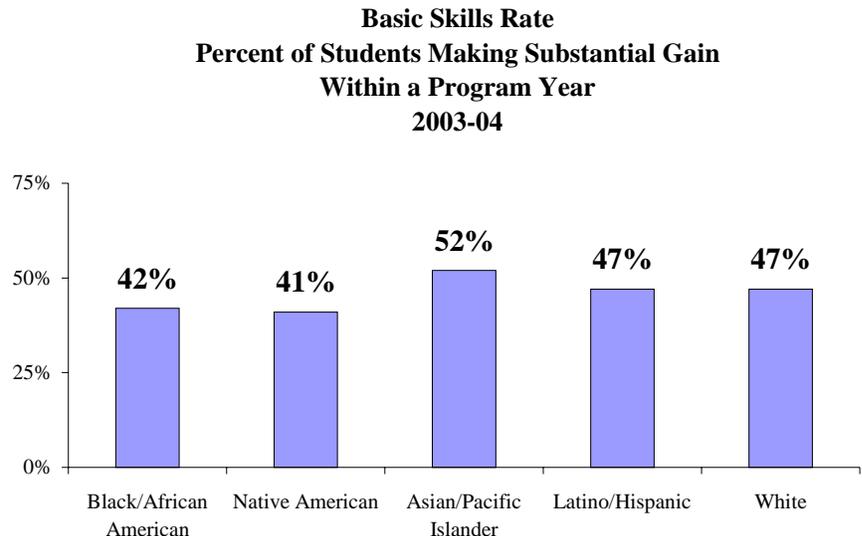
Indicator A: Basic skills rate. The basic skill rate is calculated by dividing the total number of students with gains of at least one competency level in one subject area by the total number of students taking basic skills courses (12 hours or more).

Indicator B: Basic skills transition rate. The basic skills transition rate is calculated by dividing the total number of basic skills students who concurrently or subsequently enroll in college workforce, academic or pre-college developmental instruction within 3 years after starting basic skills by that total number of basic skills students new to college in fall 3 years prior.

Indicator C: Preparing Transfer Students. This indicator measures the percent of students in target populations who start college to explore transfer, get on the transfer path- earning at least 15 college-level credits and then of these pathway students, the percent that become transfer ready.

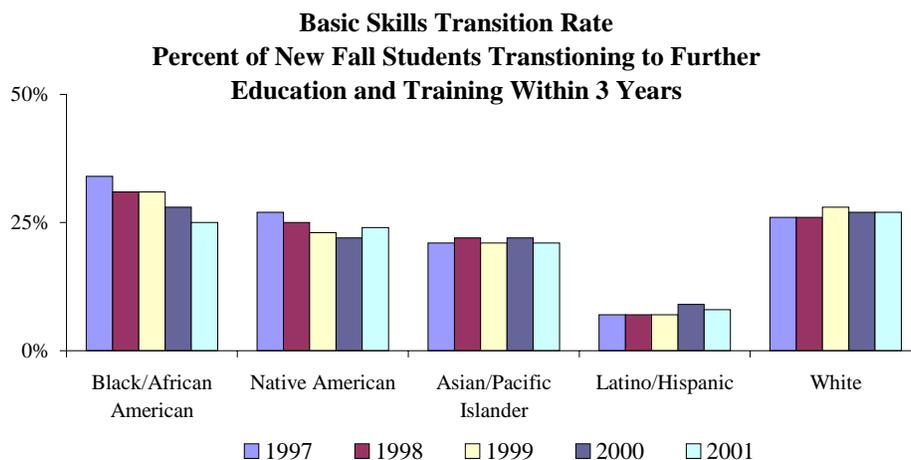
Indicator D: Preparedness for Work and Educational Outcomes for Workforce Students. This indicator measures the percent of students in target populations who start college for workforce preparation earning at least 15 vocational credits and then of these the percent of these deemed prepared for work upon exit.

Adult Basic Education Rate: The adult basic education rates shows the percentage of all students enrolled in adult basic education (ABE), GED or English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction that make substantive skills gain during the year. In fall 2003, colleges began to use a uniform standardized test to measure basic skills gains. In conjunction with the new standard testing, a new long term goal was set in summer 2005 using 2004-05 as a baseline year. In 2003-04, Black/African American and Native American students had lower basic skills gains than all other groups. Asian/Pacific islanders had the highest rate for skills gains.



Transition Rates from Adult Basic Education to Further Education and Training: The transition rate is the percent of adult basic education students who move beyond ABE/GED and ESL to further academic or workforce preparation - within three years. The overall transition rate has remained relatively constant - about one in every five adult basic education students will transition within three years. ESL students who often face two hurdles - learning English and overcoming less years of formal schooling in their countries of origin - typically have lower transition rates than ABE/GED students.

Latinos/Hispanics who comprise 79 percent of ESL participants are significantly less likely to transition than are other groups (i.e. 8 percent for Latino/Hispanic students compared with 21-27 percent for all other categories).



Black/African American students have witnessed a steady decline in their transition rates. This is due to two factors:

- More immigrant Black/African American students are enrolling for whom English is a second language. Among Black/African American students who are native born, colleges have shifted toward a harder to serve population that has lower basic skills to start.
- Since this report was last published, a policy shift has been implemented, providing students from harder to serve populations with access to ABE services.

Preparation for Transfer: There are two primary benchmarks for measuring the success of students preparing to transfer: the number who enter the transfer pathway by completing 15 quarter credits, and the number who then become “transfer ready” by completing core general education requirements.

Many students enroll at community and technical colleges each year to explore the option of transfer. As open door institutions, the colleges enroll students with wide ranges of academic preparation, time away from high school and levels of college readiness. National researchers have used successful completion of initial college courses as a proxy for evidence that the student is actually on the transfer path¹.

For the open door institutions, the successful completion of 15 quarter credits is somewhat comparable to successfully competing for admission to universities. Using this proxy, students are defined as being on the transfer path when they clear the equivalent of a one-quarter hurdle by earning 15 college-level course credits.

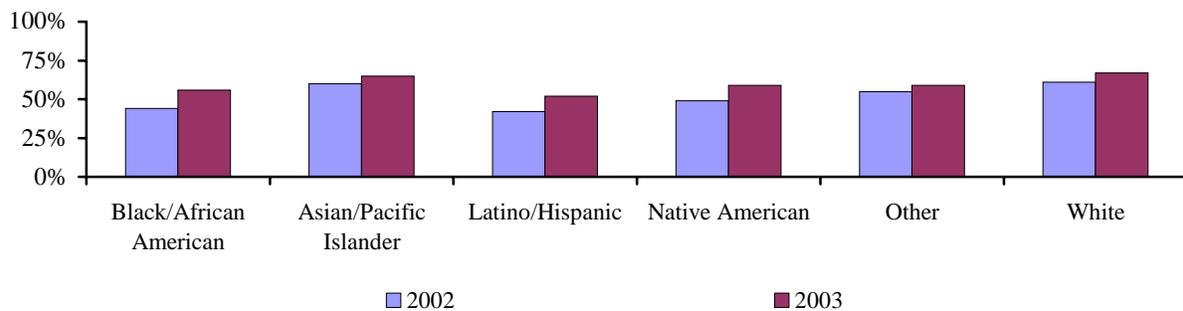
¹ The term “incidental student” was introduced by Cliff Adelman, Sr. Research Analyst, U.S. Dept of Ed to describe the students attending college for fewer than 15 quarter credits. (Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education, 1972-2000). He found that students attending community colleges were three times as likely as students who started at baccalaureates to enter with factors that put them at risk to leave early.

Community and technical colleges identify students as achieving “transfer ready” status when they have successfully completed courses in each of the categories of general education requirements with the minimum required 2.0 GPA:

- English composition and quantitative reasoning course with C or better grade
- Passing grade in at least one course each in humanities, social science and natural sciences

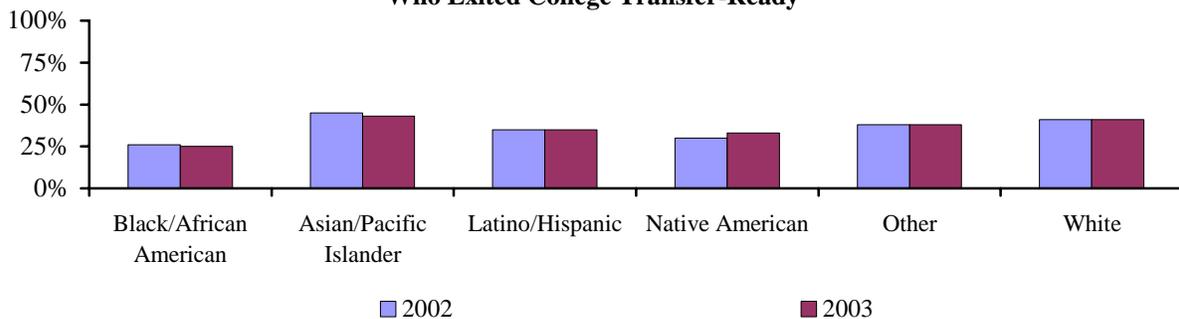
Overall, the percents of students reaching the initial benchmark by completing 15 quarter credits increased for all groups. Some of this increase can be attributed to students being younger and more likely to persist in their education plans with fewer barriers due to work and family responsibilities. However, Latino/ Hispanic, Native American and Black/African American students who explored transfer to start and left college in 2002 were less likely than white and Asian/Pacific Islander students to get on the pathway. The trend was maintained in 2003.

Transfer Pathway: Percent of Students That Start Out Exploring College Transfer and Get Solidly on the Transfer Path



Between 2002 and 2003 there was relatively little change in the pattern of students who reached the initial 15 credit threshold and who subsequently became transfer ready by the time they left the CTC system. Overall about 40 percent left college having achieved transfer ready status. Completing required math courses proved challenging for all students, and remains the major gateway course work through which many struggle to pass. Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic and Native American students were significantly less likely to achieve this status than white or Asian/Pacific Islanders.

Transfer Ready: Percent Transfer Pathway Students Who Exited College Transfer-Ready

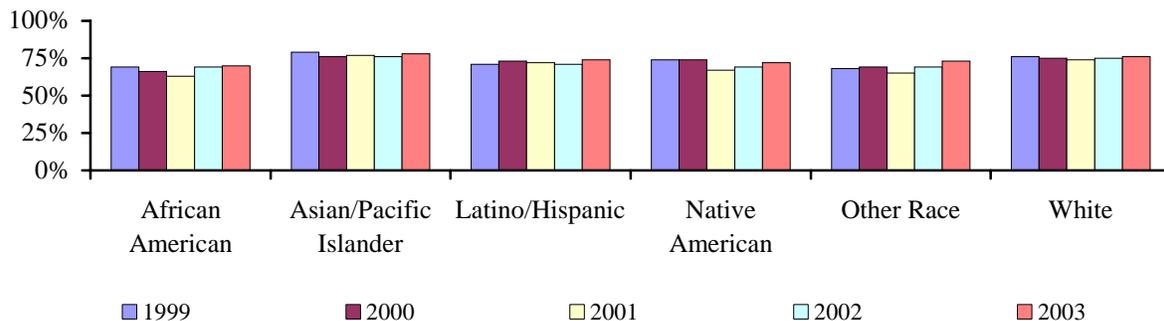


Workforce Students' Status after Training: Similar to the measurement of success for students who transfer, there are two primary benchmarks used to measure the progress of students preparing for the workforce: 1) the number who reach the initial 15 quarter credit threshold; and 2) the number who reach this threshold and then become prepared for work prior to exiting their studies.

Like students attending for transfer, students attending for workforce encompass a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. Of those attending, 70 percent will reach the 15 credit threshold. Those not reaching this mark are deemed “early leavers.” Reasons for early leaving may vary, but students typically cite work and family responsibilities, lack of financial resources to make up earning losses for time away from work and institutional factors - counseling and advising, pathways, and class scheduling.

The graph below presents the percent of workforce students leaving training who earned at least 15 vocational credits². Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic and Native American students who enroll for job preparation are still somewhat less likely to solidly start programs than are whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders.

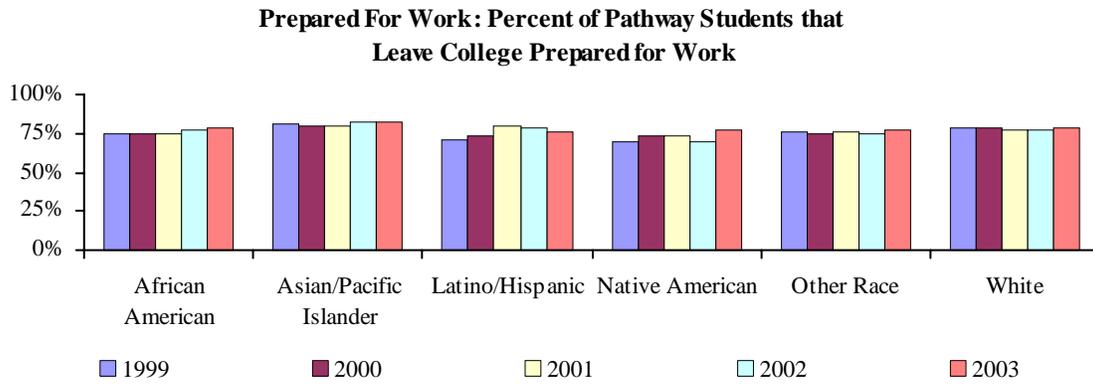
Workforce Pathway: Percent of Students that Start Out Exploring Workforce Training and Get Solidly on the Workforce Training Path



Preparation for Work: Students exiting workforce training are deemed prepared for work when they have completed a certificate or degree program, finished an individualized plan or earned 45 credits (finished one year of college). Nearly 80 percent of students who reach the 15 credit threshold will be deemed prepared for work by the time they leave college. Of those students exiting with at least 15 vocational credits, there is near equity in the percentages prepared for work, with Asian/Pacific Islanders slightly more likely to be deemed prepared than all other groups. However, Latino/Hispanics, Black/African Americans, and Native Americans typically are somewhat more likely to be non-credentialed or have shorter training when they are so deemed.

² This percent includes students who completed a specific individualized plan for fewer than 15 credits.

This is significant given recent findings from studies conducted by SBCTC researchers that evidence a tipping point of 45 college-level credits and attainment of a credential that must be reached to support family-wage employment.



PART III: COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF

Goal III: Colleges’ personnel practices will ensure that the faculty and staff of the colleges reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the state’s population.

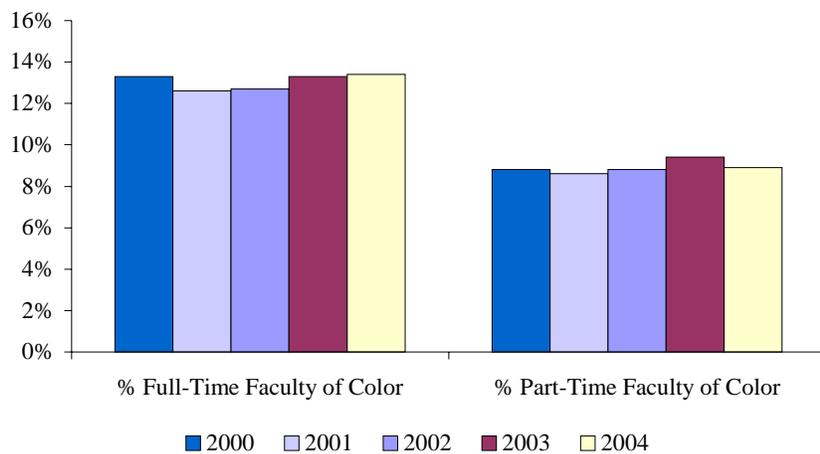
Indicator F: Relationship of percentage of faculty and staff of color to the percentage of people of color in Washington.

Consistent with Governor’s Executive Order 93-07, each college completes an annual report of their affirmative action strategies, goals and progress. After review and approval by each Board of Trustees, these reports are submitted to the Governor’s Affirmative Action Policy Committee. That group, which includes representatives of the various affirmative action affected groups, reviews and comments on each affirmative action plan. This review process assures that the leaders of colleges, including the Boards of Trustees, annually review their personnel practices to ensure that efforts are sufficient to recruit and hire staff and faculty of color.

Although the colleges are hiring an increasingly diverse staff, neither the percentage of full-time nor part-time faculty of color have kept pace with growth in the percentage of students of color. The faculty of color is also not on par with the Washington State population of color.

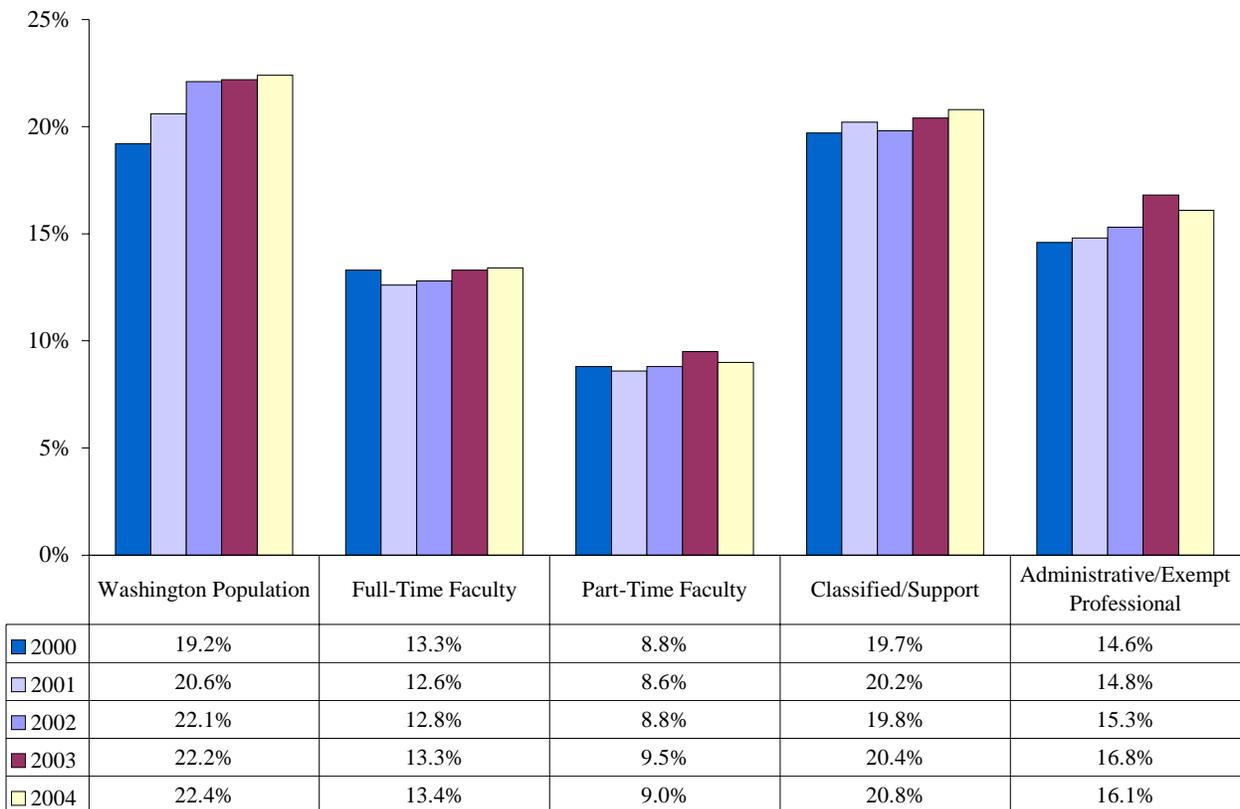
Colleges continue to try innovative ways to reach out and communicate teaching opportunities to diverse communities. However, stagnant faculty salaries have hurt colleges’ competitiveness in the jobs marketplace. This lack of competitiveness is reflected in the statistics.

Percent Full- and Part-Time Faculty of Color



Administrative/Exempt Professionals have grown at a faster rate than the target state population of color. The area that has grown the most is student services. Classified staff are nearly as diverse as the state population. Exempt staff trailed the state population of color.

**Percent of Employees and Washington State Population of Color
Community & Technical Colleges - State Funded**



Conclusions and Implications

A report recently released by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), citing research conducted by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2004), states: “Increased educational attainment results in higher personal income, a better-skilled and more adaptable workforce, fewer demands on social services, higher levels of community involvement, and better decisions regarding healthcare and personal finance” (November 2005). The report further asserts that “at a time when higher education is increasingly important, some visible race/ethnic groups are consistently in the ‘have not’ category in our society.”

The author of the NCHEMS report cautions that “considerable disparities in college attainment among certain race/ethnic groups of the population persist — and in most states these gaps are widening. . . State policymakers not only must become more aware of these disparities but they also must understand what is likely to happen if they are not addressed.”

There are serious impacts to consider. In addition to inherent social justice and equal opportunity implications, a number of economic development impacts exist: As noted earlier, Washington's citizenry continues to grow increasingly diverse, with the number of people of color in the labor force growing at more than twice the projected rate of growth for the white labor force. At the same time, significant disparities persist in educational attainment for people of color, as compared to their white counterparts.

If not addressed, this pattern will have substantial impacts on Washington's overall educational attainment level. Because educational attainment levels are directly linked to employment and income prospects, the attainment gap will also have a substantial impact on the total personal income for the state.

Community and technical colleges play a major role in providing educational access and opportunity for people of color in Washington State, serving a greater percentage of students of color than any other higher education sector. Impressive gains have been achieved related to increasing the numbers of students of color enrolled in two-year institutions.

While the CTC system is also well positioned to address the attainment gap, to support successful achievement of this challenging goal, it will be necessary to focus attention and resources on improving completion rates for students of color at all stages of the educational pipeline. This will involve gaining greater understanding of the educational needs of particular under-represented populations and development and implementation of responsive educational delivery models and student support services. Further research and identification of promising practices would be useful as next steps in support of this goal.

The recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and administrators of color will also play a crucial role in providing support for these students. Washington's 13.3 percent full-time faculty of color falls significantly below the national average of 19.3 percent of faculty of color for two-year institutions. Although gains have been made in increasing the diversity of classified staff, the percentage of exempt staff, full-time faculty and part-time faculty of color have failed to keep pace with growth in the percentage of students of color. The percentage of faculty of color is also not on par with Washington State's population of color.

A great deal of research points to the importance of diversity throughout academic communities, with the presence of diverse staff, faculty and administrators playing a crucial role in the quality of learning opportunities available. And, with the increasing diversity of our state and national citizenry, all students, not just those of color, will need to learn and build multicultural skills to support their success in life and work. More work is needed to recruit and retain faculty and exempt staff of color, to ultimately support the needs of all students.

Washington's students of color bring with them many valuable talents, cultural competencies and skill sets. The community college system is the most well situated to serve these students and to maximize their educational and training achievements.