

DATA BRIEF

Science and Engineering Bachelor's Degrees Awarded to Women Increase Overall, but Decline in Several Fields

by Susan T. Hill

Bachelor's degrees awarded in mathematics and computer science declined among both men and women from 1985 to 1995; in computer science, the percent decline in degrees to women was twice that of men.

A record number of science and engineering (S&E) bachelor's degrees were awarded to women in 1995. Women accounted for 47 percent of S&E bachelor's degrees awarded in that year.

The number of women graduating in S&E was 47 thousand higher in 1995 than in 1985 while the number of men graduating in S&E was similar in both years (but with a decline in 1990). Over this period, the greatest growth in S&E bachelor's degree awards to women occurred from 1990 to 1995 (table 1).

Women from minority groups had higher percentage increases than white women. Among the minority groups, the increases for black women were less than those of the other groups. But some of the large per-

Table 1. S&E bachelor's degree awarded to women and men: 1985, 1990, and 1995

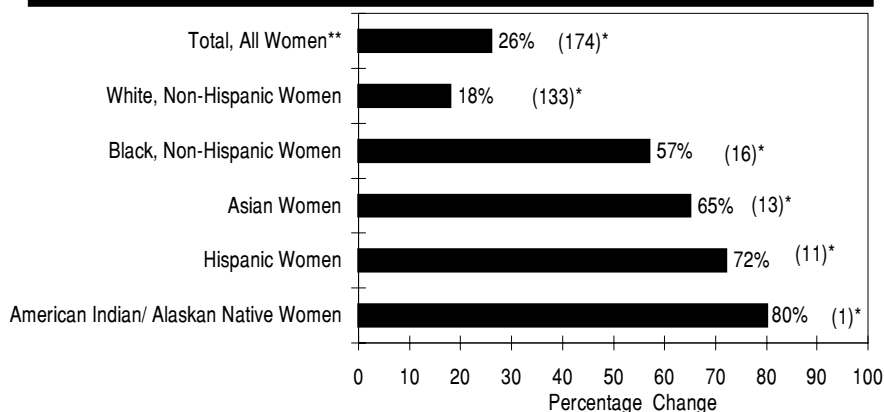
Year	S&E bachelor's degree recipients	
	Women	Men
	(in thousands)	
1985	129	203
1990	140	189
1995	176	202
Percent changes:		
1985-90	9%	-7%
1990-95	26	7

SOURCE: NSF/SRS, *Science and Engineering Degrees: 1966-95*.

centage gains—e. g., among American Indian women—still reflect the very small numbers of degrees (chart 1).

About half of the bachelor's degree recipients in the biological sciences and social sciences

Chart 1. Percent change in women earning bachelor's degrees in S&E, by race/ethnicity: 1990-95



*Number of 1995 degrees, in thousands.

**Excludes non-resident aliens and those with race/ethnicity unknown.

NOTES: (1) Numbers do not add to total in Table 1 because racial/ethnic data are collected by broad field of study and therefore cannot be tabulated by the exact NSF taxonomy. Also, non-resident aliens and those with race/ethnicity unknown are excluded.
(2) Numbers may not add to total due to rounding.

SOURCE: NSF/SRS, *Science and Engineering Degrees, by Race/Ethnicity of Recipient: 1989-95*.

Electronic Dissemination

SRS data are available through the World Wide Web (<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/stats.htm>) For NSF's Telephonic Device for the Deaf, dial 703-306-0090. If you are a user of electronic mail and have access to the internet, you may order publications electronically. Send requests to pubs@nsf.gov. In your request, include the NSF publication number and title, your name, and a complete mailing address.

were women; in psychology, 73 percent of degree recipients were women in 1995. These fields are the ones that maintained overall growth in the period 1985 to 1995 among both men and women (table 2).

Among bachelor's degree awards in many of the other S&E fields, there was not consistent growth from 1985 to 1995. For example, bachelor's degree awards in chemistry declined among both men and women from 1985 to 1990, then they began to increase among both groups to 1995. However, awards in mathematics and computer science declined among both men and women during the entire period. The declines in mathematics among women were not as great as those among men. The percentage decline in computer science was much larger among women (51 percent) than among men (28 percent) from 1985 to 1995.

Women accounted for 47 percent of mathematics bachelor's degree recipients in 1995, and of chemistry recipients, 42 percent. Among computer science bachelor's degree recipients, women comprised 29 percent. The lowest representation of

women was in physics (18 percent), a field in which the bachelor's degree awards to women have been level since 1990.

User Notes

The information presented in this Data Brief derives from two forthcoming NSF reports: *Science and Engineering Degrees: 1966-95* and *Science and Engineering Degrees, by Race/Ethnicity of Recipients: 1989-95*. These reports are based on data collected from all colleges and universities for bachelor's and master's degree and from all research doctorate recipients for doctoral degrees.

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This data brief and the two reports cited above are available from the World Wide Web. (See page 1.) For free copies of this Data Brief or the reports cited above, write to the above address, call (301) 947-2722, or e-mail to pubs@nsf.gov.

Table 2. Bachelor's degree awards in S/E fields, by sex: 1985, 1990, and 1995

S/E fields	1985	1990	1995
Total S&E.....	332,273	329,094	378,148
Women.....	128,871	140,012	175,931
Men.....	203,402	189,082	202,217
Astronomy.....	119	140	169
Women.....	30	43	52
Men.....	89	97	117
Physics.....	4,111	4,193	3,836
Women.....	561	679	675
Men.....	3,550	3,514	3,161
Chemistry.....	10,701	8,289	10,016
Women.....	3,894	3,324	4,233
Men.....	6,807	4,965	5,783
Other Physical Sciences.....	1,339	803	876
Women.....	351	273	332
Men.....	988	530	544
Earth, Atmosp, & Ocean Sciences.....	7,576	2,776	4,478
Women.....	1,861	775	1,524
Men.....	5,715	2,001	2,954
Mathematics.....	15,389	14,674	13,851
Women.....	7,094	6,811	6,491
Men.....	8,285	7,863	7,360
Computer Sciences.....	39,121	27,695	24,769
Women.....	14,431	8,374	7,063
Men.....	24,690	19,321	17,706
Engineering.....	77,572	64,705	63,371
Women.....	11,246	9,973	10,950
Men.....	66,326	54,732	52,421
Agricultural Science.....	11,907	8,411	14,580
Women.....	4,170	2,992	5,637
Men.....	7,737	5,419	8,943
Biological Science.....	39,405	38,040	56,890
Women.....	18,970	19,409	29,918
Men.....	20,435	18,631	26,972
Psychology.....	40,237	54,018	72,601
Women.....	27,422	38,619	52,963
Men.....	12,815	15,399	19,638
Social Sciences.....	84,796	105,350	112,711
Women.....	38,841	48,740	56,093
Men.....	45,955	56,610	56,618

SOURCE: NSF/SRS, *Science and Engineering Degrees: 1966-95*.

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