

# Postsecondary School Financing

ROSALIND R. BRUNO

**Almost 21 million persons were enrolled in a postsecondary school during the 1990-91 school year.**

Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation show that about 14 percent of high school graduates 17 years old and over, or 20.6 million students, were enrolled in postsecondary school at some point during the 1990-91 school year.<sup>1</sup> Among these students, 35 percent were enrolled in the first or second year of college (includes 2- and 4-year colleges), 25 percent were enrolled in the third or fourth year of college, 19 percent

<sup>1</sup>This included full-time and part-time students; students who took one course or were enrolled during one semester; as well as those who dropped out before completing a semester.

were enrolled in the fifth year of college or higher, and 20 percent were enrolled in a noncollegiate postsecondary school.<sup>2</sup>

**Postsecondary students paid an average of \$2,653 during the 1990-91 school year.**

During this period, postsecondary students paid an average of \$2,653 for their schooling.<sup>3</sup> The cost varied from \$1,066 for noncollegiate schools, such as vocational, technical, and business

<sup>2</sup>The proportion of students enrolled in the fifth year of college or higher and in a noncollegiate postsecondary institution are not significantly different.

<sup>3</sup>The cost of schooling included tuition and fees, textbooks and educational supplies, and room and board (if applicable).

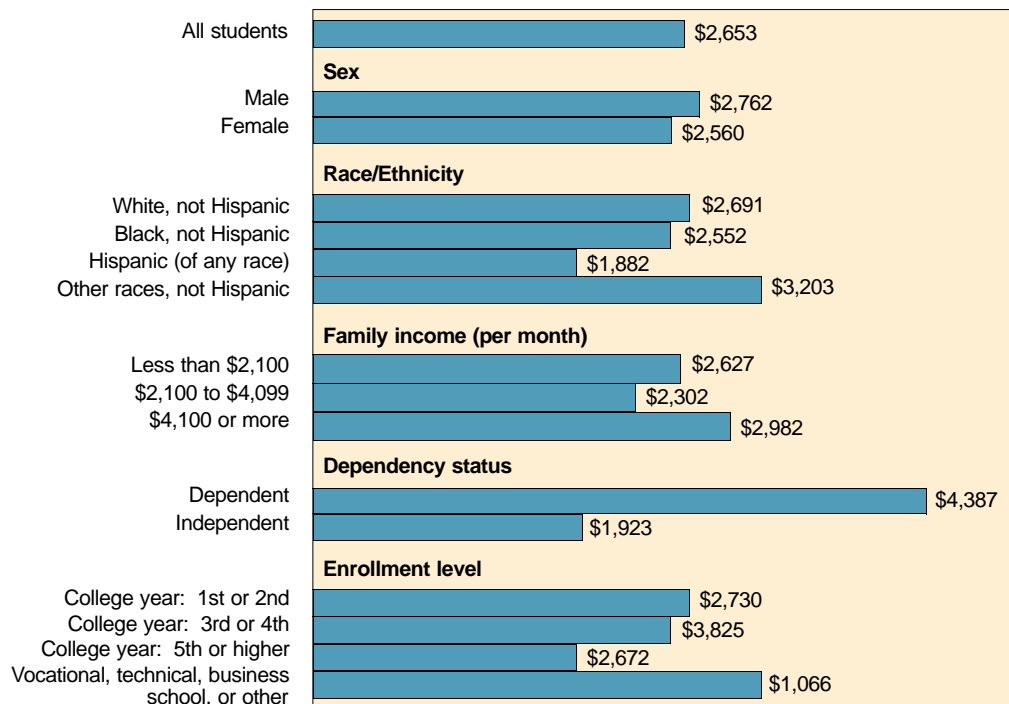
schools, to \$3,825 for students in their third or fourth year of college. Among race and ethnic groups, Hispanics had the lowest total costs (\$1,882) as well as the lowest average tuition and fees (\$1,275).<sup>4</sup>

**Schooling costs varied by the "dependency status" of the student to their original family.**

"Dependent" students, those still considered to be part of the family in which they grew up, paid a total of about \$4,387 during the 1990-91

<sup>4</sup>Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. These data do not include the population of Puerto Rico. The race and ethnic categories in this section are White, non-Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; Other races, non-Hispanic; and Hispanic. References to White, Black, and Other races refer to the non-Hispanic portion of this population.

**Average Postsecondary Schooling Costs: 1990 to 1991**



school year. On the other hand, "independent" students,<sup>5</sup> those less economically tied to their original family, paid a total of about \$1,923. Dependent students may be more likely to attend school full-time and to attend more expensive colleges than independent students. Independent students more often than dependent students may have families of their own to support, so they might be more likely to attend school part-time.

**About one-half of postsecondary school students received some kind of financial aid.**

About one-half of the 20.6 million postsecondary students received some kind of financial assistance. On average, a student received \$2,919

<sup>5</sup>Students were classified as "independent" if they were: married, 24 years old and over, a veteran, the reference person of the household, or if they had health insurance in their own name.

per year, covering about three-quarters of the students' total expenses. The average amount of aid, however, varied by level of enrollment. An average of \$1,673 in aid was reported by persons enrolled in noncollegiate institutions, compared with \$2,573 by first or second year students, \$3,312 by third or fourth year students, and \$4,223 by fifth year or higher students.

**The number of recipients as well as the average amount of aid received varied by source.**

More students enrolled in postsecondary school received financial aid from employer assistance programs (3,617,000) than from any other source. In contrast, only 416,000 students received aid from either the GI Bill or other Veterans' Educational Assistance Programs. The largest average aid amount was provided by loans (\$3,155); whereas the smallest average

aid amount was from employer assistance (\$979).

**About one-third of postsecondary students received aid from more than one source.**

Although most postsecondary students received financial aid from only one source, about one-third received aid from multiple sources. The most common multiple source was a Pell Grant-loan combination, with 6 percent of aid recipients receiving this combination. Students were more likely to receive multiple sources of financial aid if their family income was low or if they were dependent students.

**The higher the family income, the lower the proportion of postsecondary students receiving aid.**

Among postsecondary students with a "low" monthly family income (below \$2,100), 60 percent received assis-

tance, covering 80 percent of their schooling costs. The average amount of aid was \$3,622 for these students. Pell Grants, which are need-based, were the most common source of aid for students in low-income families.

In comparison, 44 percent of postsecondary students with a "high" monthly family income (\$4,100 or more) received aid, covering 69 percent of the students' costs. The average amount of aid was \$2,427 for these students. Employer assistance was the main source of aid for students in high-income families.

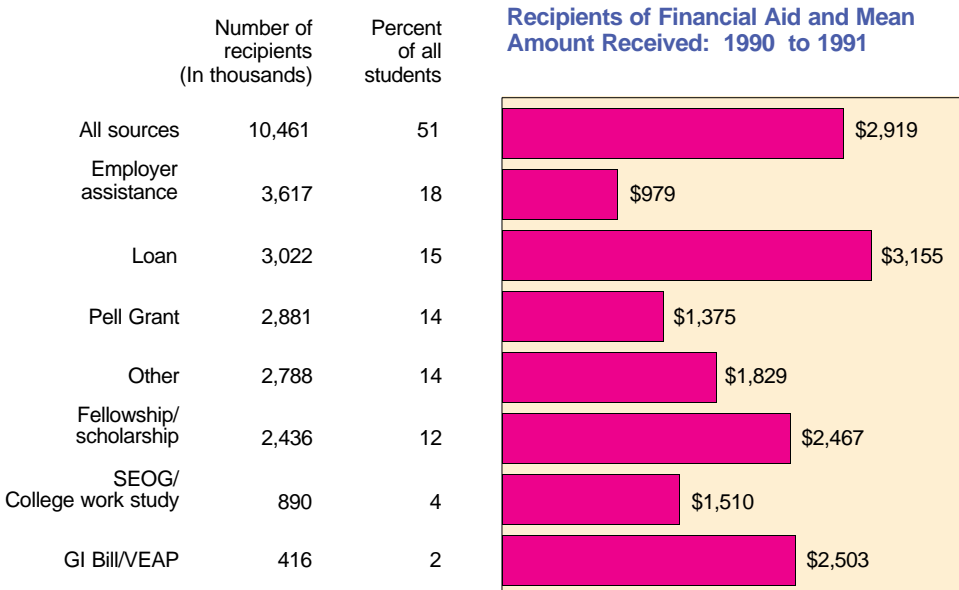
**Although a higher proportion of Black students received aid than White students, they received a smaller amount than their White counterparts.**

About 58 percent of Black students received aid, compared with 50 percent of White students. White students, however, received a larger dollar amount of aid, on average, than Black students, \$2,927 and \$2,527, respectively. Students of Other races received an average of \$4,032 in aid. Pell Grants were the largest source of financial aid for Black students. For White students, the largest source of aid was employer assistance.

**For Further Information**

See: Current Population Reports, Series P70-39, *Dollars for Scholars: Postsecondary Costs and Financing, 1990-1991.*

Contact: Rosalind R. Bruno  
Education and Social Stratification Branch  
301-457-2464



(NOTE: "SEOG" refers to Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; "VEAP" refers to Veterans' Educational Assistance Programs)