

Pell Grant Recipients in Selective Colleges and Universities¹



By Donald E. Heller

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Little is known about the income distribution of students in specific colleges and universities in the United States. While institutions are required by law to report enrollment data by race and ethnicity to the U.S. Department of Education, there is no such requirement regarding the enrollment of students from different income groups. While surveys conducted for the Department provide a good portrait of the income distribution of students across different types of institutions nationally, these data cannot be used to ascertain the distribution for any single institution.

The Department does provide data, however, on the number of Pell Grant recipients at every institution in the country. Receipt of a Pell Grant is a good proxy to estimate the income bracket of students. For example, the most recent data available from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, a nationally representative survey of students conducted for the Department in the 1999-2000 academic year, indicates that 90 percent of all dependent Pell Grant recipients in 4-year institutions came from families with incomes below \$41,000, and 75 percent of all Pell recipients had family income below \$32,000. While these exact proportions cannot be compared to all families nationally, data from the 2000 Census can be used to approximate the distribution of all families with children under 18 years. In 1999, approximately 41 percent of all families with children had incomes below \$40,000, and 29 percent had incomes below \$30,000. Thus, it is clear that the income distribution of Pell Grant recipients is much lower than that of all families with children in the nation.

The tables below provide the undergraduate enrollment, number of Pell Grant recipients, and the proportion of undergraduates receiving Pell Grants for the 2001-2002 academic year. The tables provide this information for *Barron's* "most competitive" (Table 1) and "highly competitive" (Table 2) institutions, along with a select number of institutions added to each list.²

The proportion of Pell recipients ranged from three institutions who did not enroll any Pell recipients, to a high of 35 percent of undergraduates receiving Pell Grants at Rutgers University and the University of California, Los Angeles. The average proportion of Pell recipients among the undergraduate population in these institutions was 14 percent. The "most competitive" institutions on average had 10 percent of their undergraduates receiving Pell Grants, while 16 percent of students in the "highly competitive" institutions were recipients.

Public institutions, with an average Pell Grant enrollment of 19 percent of undergraduates, had a higher proportion than did their private counterparts, at 13 percent. Among public institutions, the University of California, Los Angeles, had the highest Pell Grant enrollment (35 percent of undergraduates), while the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary had fewer than 9 percent of their undergraduates receiving Pells.

¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the research assistance of Kimberly Rogers in compiling the data for this report.

² This list of 146 colleges corresponds with those studied in Anthony Carnevale and Stephen Rose, *Socioeconomic Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Selective College Admissions*.

Among private institutions, besides the three that enrolled no Pell Grant recipients (Grove City College, Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Webb Institute), Washington and Lee University and the University of Richmond each had 5 percent or fewer of their students receiving Pell Grants. At the other end of the scale, Brigham Young University and Lyon College each had more than 30 percent of their undergraduates receiving Pell Grants.

These figures can best be understood by placing them in the context of the representation of Pell Grant recipients in 4-year institutions nationally. In 1999-2000, the most recent academic year for which national data are available, 20 percent of dependent undergraduate students in public and private 4-year institutions received Pell Grants. If community colleges are included, 18 percent of all dependent undergraduates received Pell Grants.³

These data do not provide a perfect picture of the representation of lower-income students in selective institutions in the United States. For example, the upper limit of Pell Grant eligibility approaches the median family income in the nation (\$50,000 in 1999). But, as noted earlier, 75 percent of dependent Pell recipients come from families with income below \$32,000, well below the national median.⁴

In addition, Pell Grant eligibility is a better indicator of status as a lower-income student than the often-used marker of students who are designated as “eligible for financial aid.” The latter descriptor can include, depending on how the phrase is used by institutions, students who are eligible for non-means-tested forms of aid, including unsubsidized loans, privately-originated loans, and merit scholarships.

For instance, while the median income of all dependent Pell Grant recipients in 4-year institutions nationally in 1999-2000 was \$23,340, the median income of students who received *any* form of financial aid was \$53,413, or more than double that of Pell recipients. Seventy percent of all students in these institutions received some form of aid.

Table 1: Most Competitive Institutions

| Institution | Undergraduate Enrollment | Pell Grant Recipients | % Pell Recipients | Notes |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Amherst College, MA | 1,640 | 259 | 15.8% | |
| Barnard College/Columbia University, NY | 2,261 | 417 | 18.4% | |
| Bates College, ME | 1,767 | 153 | 8.7% | |
| Boston College, MA | 9,797 | 1,038 | 10.6% | |
| Bowdoin College, ME | 1,635 | 166 | 10.2% | |
| Brown University, RI | 5,999 | 583 | 9.7% | |
| California Institute of Technology, CA | 942 | 144 | 15.3% | |
| Carnegie Mellon University, PA | 5,310 | 603 | 11.4% | |
| Claremont McKenna College, CA | 1,044 | 151 | 14.5% | |
| Colby College, ME | 1,809 | 117 | 6.5% | |
| Colgate University, NY | 2,814 | 294 | 10.4% | |
| College of the Holy Cross, MA | 2,811 | 241 | 8.6% | |
| College of William and Mary, VA | 5,604 | 450 | 8.0% | |
| Columbia University, NY | 6,867 | 1,023 | 14.9% | |
| Cooper Union, NY | 878 | 150 | 17.1% | |
| Cornell University, NY | 13,784 | 2,253 | 16.3% | |

³ Community colleges enroll relatively few dependent students who take enough courses to qualify for receipt of a Pell Grant, thus the overall rate of Pell Grant recipients drops when community colleges are included in the sample. If you restrict the sample to full-time dependents at 4-year institutions and community colleges, the proportion of Pell Grant recipients among all students increases to 21 percent.

⁴ Approximately 47 percent of all Pell recipients in 4-year institutions are independent students. For federal financial aid purposes, a student can be declared independent if she meets one or more of the following conditions: at least 24 years old; married; veteran of the U.S. armed forces; has a dependent other than a spouse; or is an orphan.

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|--|--------|-------|-------|---|
| Dartmouth College, NH | 4,118 | 447 | 10.9% | |
| Davidson College, NC | 1,673 | 107 | 6.4% | |
| Duke University, NC | 6,203 | 629 | 10.1% | |
| Georgetown University, DC | 6,422 | 691 | 10.8% | |
| Georgia Institute of Technology, GA | 11,043 | 1,375 | 12.5% | |
| Grove City College, PA | 2,316 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| Harvard University, MA | 9,637 | 655 | 6.8% | |
| Harvey Mudd College, CA | 706 | 81 | 11.5% | |
| Haverford College, PA | 1,138 | 152 | 13.4% | |
| Johns Hopkins University, MD | 5,370 | 517 | 9.6% | |
| Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MA | 4,213 | 523 | 12.4% | |
| Middlebury College, VT | 2,328 | 189 | 8.1% | |
| New College of the U. of South Florida, FL | 629 | - | - | 1 |
| Northwestern University, IL | 9,167 | 870 | 9.5% | |
| Pomona College, CA | 1,548 | 186 | 12.0% | |
| Princeton University, NJ | 4,744 | 350 | 7.4% | |
| Rice University, TX | 2,728 | 341 | 12.5% | |
| Stanford University, CA | 7,279 | 855 | 11.7% | |
| Swarthmore College, PA | 1,467 | 191 | 13.0% | |
| Tufts University, MA | 4,775 | 498 | 10.4% | |
| United States Air Force Academy, CO | 4,365 | - | - | 2 |
| United States Coast Guard Academy, CT | 897 | - | - | 2 |
| United States Military Academy, NY | 4,152 | - | - | 2 |
| United States Naval Academy, MD | 4,297 | - | - | 2 |
| University of Chicago, IL | 4,075 | 507 | 12.4% | |
| University of Notre Dame, IN | 8,208 | 660 | 8.0% | |
| University of Pennsylvania, PA | 11,781 | 1,157 | 9.8% | |
| University of Virginia, VA | 13,764 | 1,183 | 8.6% | |
| Vassar College, NY | 2,439 | 291 | 11.9% | |
| Wake Forest University, NC | 4,136 | 289 | 7.0% | |
| Washington and Lee University, VA | 1,712 | 58 | 3.4% | |
| Washington University in St. Louis, MO | 6,772 | 544 | 8.0% | |
| Webb Institute, NY | 73 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| Wellesley College, MA | 2,273 | 355 | 15.6% | |
| Wesleyan University, CT | 2,792 | 385 | 13.8% | |
| Williams College, MA | 1,997 | 188 | 9.4% | |
| Yale University, CT | 5,286 | 536 | 10.1% | |

1 The U. of South Florida awards all Pell Grants centrally, so no separate data are available for New College.

2 The federal government provides full scholarships for all attendees.

Table 2: Highly Competitive Institutions

| Institution | Undergraduate Enrollment | Pell Grant Recipients | % Pell Recipients | Notes |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Austin College, TX | 1,227 | 301 | 24.5% | |
| Babson College, MA | 1,719 | 166 | 9.7% | |
| Beloit College, WI | 1,273 | 203 | 15.9% | |
| Boston University, MA | 17,602 | 1,910 | 10.9% | |
| Brandeis University, MA | 3,081 | 417 | 13.5% | |
| Brigham Young University, UT | 29,815 | 9,188 | 30.8% | |
| Bryn Mawr College, PA | 1,333 | 197 | 14.8% | |
| Bucknell University, PA | 3,431 | 414 | 12.1% | |
| Carleton College, MN | 1,948 | 196 | 10.1% | |
| Case Western Reserve University, OH | 3,381 | 461 | 13.6% | |

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|--|--------|-------|-------|---|
| College of the Atlantic, ME | 269 | 71 | 26.4% | |
| Colorado College, CO | 1,934 | 324 | 16.8% | |
| Colorado School of Mines, CO | 2,952 | 411 | 13.9% | |
| Connecticut College, CT | 1,835 | 194 | 10.6% | |
| Drew University/College of Liberal Arts, NJ | 1,536 | 230 | 15.0% | |
| Emory University, GA | 6,374 | 776 | 12.2% | |
| Franklin and Marshall College, PA | 1,887 | 161 | 8.5% | |
| Furman University, SC | 2,767 | 238 | 8.6% | |
| George Washington University, DC | 10,063 | 903 | 9.0% | |
| Gettysburg College, PA | 2,277 | 275 | 12.1% | |
| Grinnell College, IA | 1,338 | 178 | 13.3% | |
| Hamilton College, NY | 1,755 | 260 | 14.8% | |
| Hampshire College, MA | 1,219 | 213 | 17.5% | |
| Illinois Institute of Technology, IL | 1,842 | 353 | 19.2% | |
| Illinois Wesleyan University, IL | 2,064 | 237 | 11.5% | |
| Jewish Theological Seminary, NY | 173 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| Kenyon College, OH | 1,587 | 131 | 8.3% | |
| Kettering University, MI | 2,653 | 460 | 17.3% | |
| Knox College, IL | 1,143 | 242 | 21.2% | |
| Lafayette College, PA | 2,330 | 175 | 7.5% | |
| Lawrence University, WI | 1,323 | 248 | 18.7% | |
| Lehigh University, PA | 4,650 | 581 | 12.5% | |
| Loyola College in Maryland, MD | 3,477 | 245 | 7.0% | |
| Lyon College, AR | 521 | 167 | 32.1% | |
| Macalester College, MN | 1,822 | 273 | 15.0% | |
| Mary Washington College, VA | 4,171 | 402 | 9.6% | |
| Miami University, OH | 19,329 | 2,839 | 14.7% | |
| Mount Holyoke College, MA | 2,037 | 424 | 20.8% | |
| New York University, NY | 19,028 | 3,509 | 18.4% | |
| Oberlin College, OH | 2,840 | 482 | 17.0% | |
| Pennsylvania State University/University Park, PA | 34,539 | - | - | 1 |
| Pepperdine University, CA | 2,936 | 516 | 17.6% | |
| Pitzer College, CA | 921 | 225 | 24.4% | |
| Providence College, RI | 4,341 | 366 | 8.4% | |
| Reed College, OR | 1,396 | 228 | 16.3% | |
| Rhodes College, TN | 1,535 | 150 | 9.8% | |
| Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, IN | 1,573 | 233 | 14.8% | |
| Rutgers University/College of Engineering, NJ | 28,351 | 9,848 | 34.7% | 2 |
| Rutgers University/Cook College, NJ | - | - | - | |
| Rutgers University/Rutgers College, NJ | - | - | - | |
| Saint Louis University, MO | 9,604 | 1,400 | 14.6% | |
| Saint Mary's College of Maryland, MD | 1,688 | 196 | 11.6% | |
| Saint Olaf College, MN | 3,011 | 382 | 12.7% | |
| Santa Clara University, CA | 4,279 | 568 | 13.3% | |
| Sarah Lawrence College, NY | 1,214 | 151 | 12.4% | |
| Scripps College, CA | 798 | 112 | 14.0% | |
| Skidmore College, NY | 2,487 | 330 | 13.3% | |
| Smith College, MA | 2,665 | 642 | 24.1% | |
| Southwestern University, TX | 1,320 | 173 | 13.1% | |
| State U. of New York at Binghamton, NY | 10,167 | - | - | 3 |
| State U. of New York/College at Geneseo, NY | 5,371 | - | - | 3 |
| State U. of New York/College of Environmental Science and Forestry, NY | 1,193 | - | - | 3 |

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|---|--------|-------|-------|---|
| Stevens Institute of Technology, NJ | 1,655 | 388 | 23.4% | |
| Syracuse University, NY | 12,464 | 2,500 | 20.1% | |
| The College of New Jersey, NJ | 5,971 | 859 | 14.4% | |
| Trinity College, CT | 2,074 | 273 | 13.2% | |
| Trinity University, TX | 2,383 | 264 | 11.1% | |
| Tulane University, LA | 7,479 | 1,239 | 16.6% | |
| Union College, NY | 2,118 | 321 | 15.2% | |
| United States Merchant Marine Academy, NY | 850 | - | - | 4 |
| University of California at Berkeley, CA | 23,269 | 7,549 | 32.4% | |
| University of California at Davis, CA | 21,356 | 6,080 | 28.5% | |
| University of California at Los Angeles, CA | 25,328 | 8,887 | 35.1% | |
| University of California at Santa Barbara, CA | 17,724 | 4,395 | 24.8% | |
| University of Florida, FL | 33,639 | 7,384 | 22.0% | |
| University of Georgia, GA | 24,829 | 3,349 | 13.5% | |
| University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL | 28,746 | 4,483 | 15.6% | |
| University of Miami, FL | 9,359 | 2,051 | 21.9% | |
| University of Michigan/Ann Arbor, MI | 24,547 | 3,073 | 12.5% | |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC | 15,844 | 2,090 | 13.2% | |
| University of Puget Sound, WA | 2,604 | 369 | 14.2% | |
| University of Richmond, VA | 3,663 | 186 | 5.1% | |
| University of Rochester, NY | 4,665 | 843 | 18.1% | |
| University of Southern California, CA | 16,037 | 3,868 | 24.1% | |
| University of the South, TN | 1,329 | 173 | 13.0% | |
| University of Wisconsin/Madison, WI | 29,861 | 3,484 | 11.7% | |
| Ursinus College, PA | 1,324 | 251 | 19.0% | |
| Vanderbilt University, TN | 6,077 | 609 | 10.0% | |
| Villanova University, PA | 7,392 | 635 | 8.6% | |
| Wheaton College, IL | 2,386 | 301 | 12.6% | |
| Whitman College, WA | 1,439 | 126 | 8.8% | |
| Worcester Polytechnic Institute, MA | 2,823 | 421 | 14.9% | |

- 1 Pennsylvania State University awards all Pell Grants centrally, so no separate data are available for the University Park campus.
- 2 Enrollment and Pell Grant data are for all undergraduates at Rutgers.
- 3 The State University of New York awards all Pell Grants centrally, so no separate data are available for each campus.
- 4 The federal government provides full scholarships for all attendees.

Data Sources:

Undergraduate enrollment data were obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS College Opportunities On-Line website (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/>), and represent enrollments in the fall of the 2001-2002 academic year. The Pell Grant data for the same academic year were provided by Barry Goldstein of the Office of Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education. Figures from the 1999-2000 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study were calculated from the National Center for Education Statistics Data Analysis System (<http://nces.ed.gov/das/>). Median income figures for the nation were obtained from the 2000 Census (<http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>).

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