

Fall 2002

Student Diversity

The Cal Poly Strategic Plan states that "Cal Poly shall value diversity and promote mutual respect and interaction among all individuals." This publication provides a broad portrait of the diversity of Cal Poly's current student population as well as a historical perspective.

As part of Cal Poly's review by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 2000, the accreditation team noted that "Cal Poly faces extraordinary challenges in achieving greater diversity" due, in part, to its location and its emphasis on academic programs requiring strong preparation in math and science.

While recognizing these and other impediments, the WASC Commission "urge[d] the institution to reinforce and strengthen its efforts to integrate diversity goals within the framework of its learning centers. This is particularly important so as to position Cal Poly to fulfill its mission successfully within California over the next several decades."

This publication provides comparative data about the diversity of Cal Poly's recent students in order to facilitate continued efforts to apply the campus Strategic Plan policy that "Cal Poly shall initiate or maintain programs to increase the number of qualified student applicants, attract and retain students of high caliber, and increase the diversity of the student population in accordance with the campus enrollment management plan."

While many factors and groups contribute to a diverse student body, this publication focuses on a limited number of demographic factors for which IP&A has long-term trend data. The student characteristics included in this publication are ethnic origin, gender, age, and geographic origin.

■ Ethnic Diversity of Students

The 2000 U.S. Census provides the opportunity to make some broad comparisons for ethnic diversity among Cal Poly, the CSU system, the County of San Luis Obispo, and the State of California.

- About 60% of the total enrollment of Cal Poly students in the Fall of 2000 reported their ethnic origin as "white" and about 26% chose a "non-white" response (with 14% "not responding" and 1% choosing an "international" designation).
- The CSU system as a whole reported 39% "white," 43% "non-white," 13% "no response," and 4% "international."
- According to 2000 census figures, the County of San Luis Obispo had approximately 76% "white" residents and 24% "non-white" residents.
- The State of California, on the other hand, reported a 2000 census population of about 47% "white" residents and 53% "non-white."

Note: Ethnic origin is "self-reported" for Cal Poly and CSU students, and they have the option to choose a "no response" category. While the percentages are not directly comparable due to the "no response" category for students, the data show that Cal Poly is more ethnically diverse than the local area.

■ Gender Diversity of Students

Over the years, the percentage of women and men in the undergraduate and post-baccalaureate Cal Poly student body has changed dramatically. In the early 1960's women made up about 22% of the total Cal Poly enrollment. While this might seem like a low percentage, it needs to be noted that enrollment was

limited to men only from 1929 to 1956. By the fall of 1980, the percentage of women enrolled (undergraduate and post-baccalaureate) had risen to 42%. Over the next two decades that percentage increased to 45%.

By comparison, the CSU system enrollment by gender in 1960 was 40% women and 60% men. By the late 1970's the CSU's female enrollment was at 50%, and over the next 20 years that percentage increased to 58% female students enrolled.

■ Age Diversity of Students

Cal Poly has traditionally been an undergraduate, residential campus, and the average age of Cal Poly students is consistently younger than for the CSU system as a whole. Undergraduates averaged 21.1 years, compared to 24.1 years for all undergraduates enrolled in the CSU system (based on last available data, Fall 1999).

■ Geographic Origin of Students

Because of Cal Poly's statewide mandate as a polytechnic university, the campus population is comprised of students from counties throughout California. Cal Poly students typically display a different mix of geographic origin than many of the urban CSU campuses. These "commuter" campuses typically draw a large percentage of their student population from their contiguous communities.

Inside

University-wide Student Ethnic Diversity	2
Student Ethnic Diversity by College	2
Student Gender Diversity University-wide and by College	3
University-wide Student Age Diversity	3
Retention and Graduation by Ethnic Origin and Gender	3
Geographic Origin of Students	4
New Undergraduate Student Ethnic Diversity	4

University-wide Student Ethnic Diversity

Between the Fall of 1990 and the Fall of 2001 some distinct patterns can be seen in the ethnic diversity of Cal Poly students.

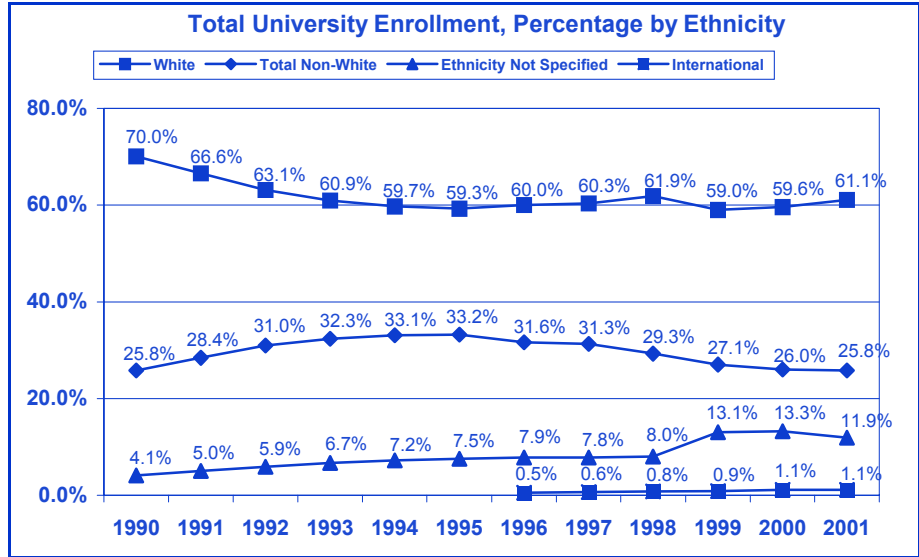
The percentage of students who identified themselves as non-white increased from 1990 to 1995, then decreased from 1995 to 2001. Interpreting this pattern is complicated by the recent increase in the proportion of students who select "no response" rather than identify their ethnic background.

Note: International student headcount is not available before Fall 1996.

Diversity Index

Another way to observe changes in the racial and ethnic diversity at Cal Poly is to use a "diversity index." This index was developed to interpret 1990 U.S. Census data and has the advantage of capturing the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body in a single number. Looking at Cal Poly's diversity index over time can show the increase or decrease in total campus diversity regardless of the changes in numbers within specific minority groups.

The diversity index expresses how likely you are to meet someone unlike yourself. It calculates the probability that any two randomly selected students



will have a different racial or ethnic background. The diversity index can range from a low of 0.0 (all students on campus are of the same race and ethnicity) to 1.0 (every student is different). The closer the index is to 1.0, the more diverse the student body. *Note: For the purpose of index calculation, the category choices "no response" and "other" are excluded.*

In 1990, the possibility that any two randomly chosen Cal Poly students would be different from one another was 42%. By 1995, the index calculated a 52% chance. The calculation in 2001 was 44%, indicating a decrease in diversity from 1995 but a more diverse campus than the index calculated in 1990.

Student Ethnic Diversity by College

Cal Poly's overall diversity is influenced by the disciplinary composition of the campus and each college, and by the proportion of total enrollment housed in each college.

The individual colleges contribute to diversity in different ways. For example, the College of Engineering (which accounted for about 26% of the Fall 2001 undergraduate enrollment) tends to traditionally have a lower percentage

of female undergraduate students than the other colleges (17%), but has the highest percentage of non-white students (35%). On the other hand, the College of Liberal Arts (with

18% of the undergraduate enrollment) traditionally has a high percentage of female students, but is not as diverse ethnically (22% non-white).

All Students by College and Ethnicity	% White			% Total Non-White			% Ethnicity Not Specified			% International
	1990	1995	2001	1990	1995	2001	1990	1995	2001	2001
Agriculture	83.5	72.2	70.1	12.8	20.8	17.6	3.6	7.0	11.8	0.5
Architecture & Environmental Design	57.5	51.7	56.1	38.9	40.8	30.0	3.6	7.5	12.6	1.3
Business	68.5	59.4	61.8	28.0	34.6	26.8	3.5	6.0	10.5	0.9
Engineering	57.1	48.4	52.3	38.3	44.6	34.9	4.6	7.0	11.3	1.5
Liberal Arts	74.4	62.4	64.4	21.6	32.6	22.1	4.1	8.8	13.0	0.5
Science & Mathematics	73.1	60.0	64.5	22.5	32.7	22.9	4.5	7.3	12.0	0.5
University Center for Teacher Education	82.2	66.5	62.9	9.9	22.4	21.7	7.9	11.2	15.4	0.0
University Total	70.0	59.3	61.1	25.8	33.2	25.8	4.1	7.5	11.9	1.1

Student Gender Diversity University-wide and by College

While a majority of the University's undergraduates are male students, at the college level there is a higher percentage of female undergraduate students in three of the six colleges: the Colleges of Agriculture, Liberal Arts, and Science and Mathematics.

Over the decade of the 90's, all of the colleges, with the exception of the College of Engineering, experienced an increase in the percentage of undergraduate female enrollment. The College of Science and Mathematics displayed the largest change with its female undergraduate enrollment growing from 48% in 1990 to 57% in 2001.

In contrast to Cal Poly's undergraduates, post-baccalaureate enrollment was 50% female and 50% male in 1980; 53% female and 47% male in 1990; with the percentage of female enrollment increasing to 56% by 2001. This is influenced by the high percentage of women enrolled in UCTE, typically above 70% of the total enrollment.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics' "Digest of Education Statistics 2001," this is consistent with national trends for four-year public institutions. Nationwide, there were large enrollment increases in the late 1990's, much of that growth in female enrollment. Nationally, the enrollment ratio for four-year public institutions is 55% female to 45% male.

Undergraduates by College and Gender	% Female			% Male		
	1990	1995	2001	1990	1995	2001
College of Agriculture	53	50	57	47	50	43
College of Architecture & Environmental Design	32	36	34	68	64	66
College of Business	40	43	44	60	57	56
College of Engineering	17	18	17	83	82	83
College of Liberal Arts	65	64	71	35	36	29
College of Science & Math	48	51	57	52	49	43
University Total	42	42	45	58	58	55

University-wide Student Age Diversity

The percentage of "traditional age" students (the 18 to 24 year old group) at Cal Poly has varied over the years, but has consistently been larger than for the CSU as a whole.

In 1970, 83% of Cal Poly students were in that "traditional age" category. In 1985 that percentage remained the same, but by 1995 that percentage had dropped to 76%. The enrollment of 18 to 24 year olds grew again in the late 1990's, exceeding 88% in 2001.

The CSU as a whole also experienced a drop in "traditional age" students in the mid-1990's. In 1970 about 60% of the CSU students were between 18 and 24, dropping to 56% in 1995, and climbing back up to 60% in the late 1990's.

Throughout the 1990's, the average age of all enrolled students at Cal Poly remained steady at 22 to 23 years.

The average age for the CSU total enrollment also was steady at about 24 years.

Age Group	% of Total Student Enrollment Cal Poly			CSU Systemwide
	1970	1985	2001	1999*
20 and Under	41	35	51	31
21	17	15	15	11
22	14	16	12	12
23	8	10	7	9
24	5	6	4	7
25-29	11	12	6	16
30 and Over	6	7	5	14

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

*Last year for which CSU data is available.

Retention and Graduation by Ethnic Origin and Gender

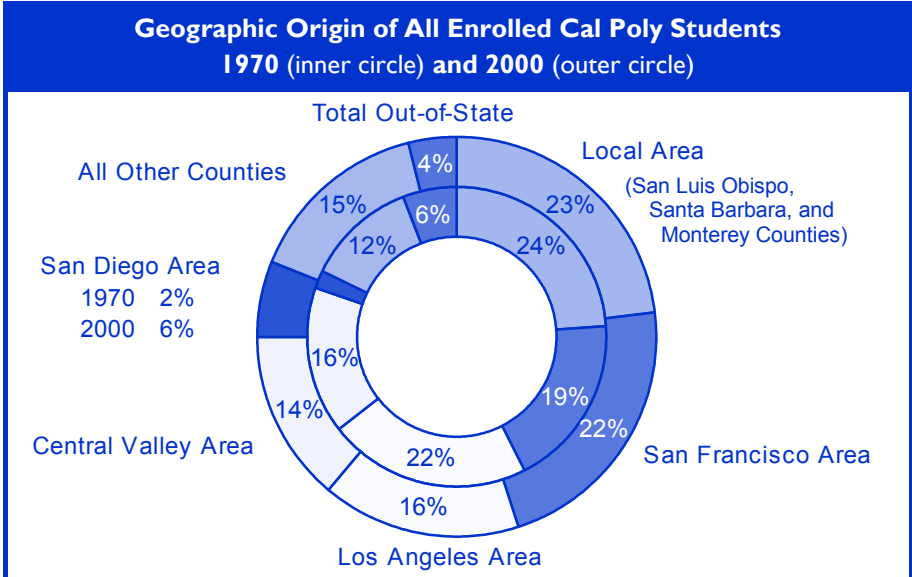
The **PolyTrends** publication on Retention and Graduation of Full-time Undergraduates, May 2001, contains detailed retention and graduation rates by ethnic origin and gender at the University level. View it on the IP&A website, <http://www.calpoly.edu/~inststdy>.

Geographic Origin of Students

The overwhelming majority of Cal Poly and CSU students are residents of the state of California (as defined for fee paying purposes).

In 1970, 94% of Cal Poly students were registered as California residents. Over the past 30 years that percentage has changed very little with 96% of enrolled Cal Poly students classified as residents in both 1990 and 2000.

For the CSU system, California resident enrollment was at 99% in 1975, dropping to 96% in 1980. By 1990, the percentage of California residents was at 97% and has continued at that level through the end of the 1990's.



New Undergraduate Student Ethnic Diversity

Changes in the ethnic diversity of Cal Poly's entering freshmen and transfer student classes influence the total undergraduate student population.

As displayed in the following table, the percentage of Fall quarter first-time freshmen reporting their ethnic origin category as "white" grew by 11% from 1990 to 2001. Over the same period of time, the total "non-white" percentage dropped by 18%.

New Fall transfer students display a less dramatic change over the same period with a drop in the total "non-white" group of about 4% and a drop in the "white" group of less than 1%.

These changes must be viewed, however, in the context of the fluctuations

in the percent of students choosing the "no response" category. In Fall 1995, about 7% of total new students (first-time freshmen and transfers) chose not to respond to the admission form's ethnic origin question. This percentage remained relatively stable at about 7 to 7.5% through Fall 1998. Then in Fall 1999, the percentage jumped to over 30%, dropping back to 10% for 2000, and to approximately 8% for Fall 2001. These variations make ethnic origin trend analysis for new students problematic.

It should be noted that while the largest influx of new students takes place in the Fall quarter, the populations entering as new students in the past Summer (2001) and Winter (2002) quarters were more ethnically diverse than in Fall 2001.

Analysis of trends in new undergraduate student enrollment has been complicated as well since California voters passed Proposition 209 in 1996 which prohibited public universities from considering gender, race, and ethnic origin in the admissions process.

Ethnic Origin	First-time Freshmen				New Transfer Students			
	1990	1995	2000	2001	1990	1995	2000	2001
% Total Non-White	43.3	33.6	24.1	25.3	32.9	37.5	26.4	29.2
% White	53.2	60.9	69.0	64.6	58.5	53.8	57.1	57.7
% No Response	3.5	5.5	6.6	9.6	8.6	8.7	13.2	10.4
% International	n/a	n/a	0.2	0.4	n/a	n/a	3.3	2.7
University Total	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

For additional information, contact

Institutional Planning and Analysis, Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(805) 756-2204 fax (806) 756-5292 <http://www.calpoly.edu/~inststdy>

