

# Overview

Private career schools, institutes, colleges and universities provide diverse educational opportunities for students interested in being trained for career-specific opportunities in art, business, information technology, allied health, culinary arts, and over 200 other fields of study. These educational institutions cover the full spectrum of postsecondary education: short-term certificate and diploma programs, two-year and four-year associate and baccalaureate degrees, and masters and doctoral programs.

Career colleges comprise 39% of the institutions participating in Title IV programs. These career colleges enrolled nearly 2.2 million students in the 2006-2007 academic year. The majority of career college students attended institutions whose longest program is 4 years or more. The career college sector is more likely than the non-profit sector to serve students who are independent, have incomes in the lowest quartile, have parents with an education below the high school level, and are racial or ethnic minorities. Because of this student profile, a higher proportion of career college students received federal financial aid in 2005-2006 than did students from other sectors.

Forty-three percent of students attending career colleges are minorities. Career colleges and universities do not simply enroll large numbers of minority students; they provide a much higher level of student services to help those students persist and succeed in their studies. Thirty-eight percent of degrees conferred at career colleges went to minorities, compared to 19% at public, and 16% at private, not-for-profit institutions. Twenty-two percent of all African-Americans and 19% of all Hispanics who received an associate's degree earned it at a career college.

Graduation rates at career colleges are higher than at other comparable institutions. Three years after enrollment, students at private career schools and colleges have a higher completion rate (64%) and lower dropout rate (33%) than students at community colleges (38% and 45%, respectively). And six years after initial enrollment, a follow-up study on students who enrolled in certificate or associate's degree programs revealed that students at career colleges attained certificates 8 months sooner and associate's degrees 7 months sooner, than students who started at public colleges.

Occupations requiring postsecondary career training will have a significant increase in job growth through 2016. Career college programs will meet the market needs of high-growth occupations, such as computer support; information systems; business; nursing; dental and medical assisting; occupational and physical therapy; health technology; and legal assisting. Along with the benefits career schools and colleges provide to students, they also provide financial benefits to the community.

# I. CAREER COLLEGE ACCESS

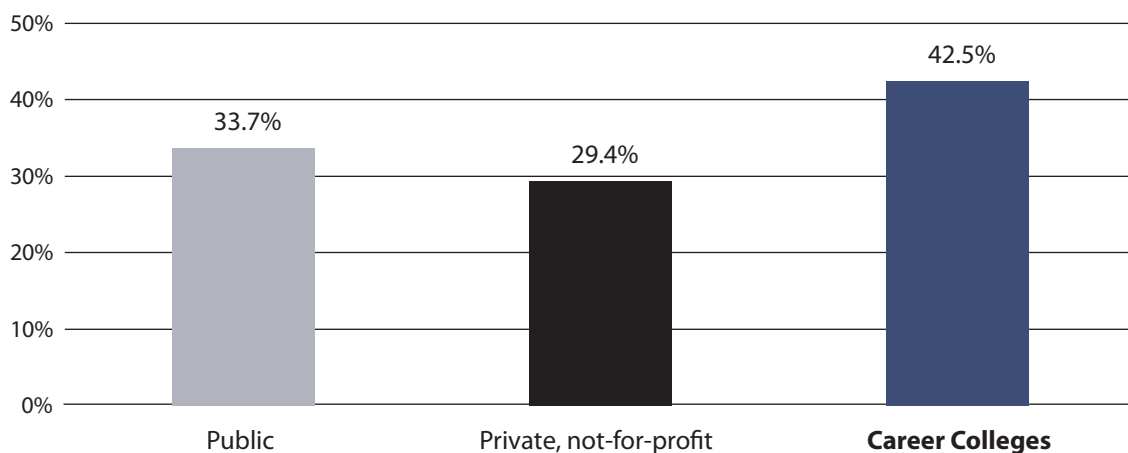
## A. Career College Student Profile

Career schools and colleges serve a diverse group of students. They enroll a student population that has many attributes in common with those students attending public and private not-for-profit postsecondary institutions, yet they continue to serve a larger portion of minority students and lower socioeconomic students.



- About 43 percent of students at career colleges are minorities, comprising a greater share than are enrolled at private not-for-profit and public institutions. (Source: 1)

**Figure A. Percentage of Minority Students Enrolled Annually by Sector, Fall 2006**



Source: 1

- In 2005-2006, over 208,000 minority graduates with degrees or certificates from career colleges became available to the labor market. That compares with 596,460 minority graduates in public and private not-for-profit institutions, and 36,916 at HBCUs (*Historically Black Colleges & Universities*). (Source: 1)
- Career colleges represented six of the ten four-year institutions producing the largest number of minority graduates with associate's degrees in 2005-2006. (Source: 2)
- Six of the top ten institutions producing minority graduates with bachelor's degrees in Computer and Information Sciences in 2005-2006 were career colleges. (Source: 2)
- Career colleges made up four of the top ten institutions awarding MBAs to minorities, and half of those producing minority doctorates in business. (Source: 2)