

Fact Sheet:
What's Wrong with the Guys?
By Tom Mortenson

Over the last 30 years, nearly all of the progress in educational attainment has been achieved by females—almost none has been earned by males.

College Enrollment Indicators

College enrollment is voluntary. Only those who want to be in college matriculate and persist.

1. In the fall of 2000 there were 5,578,000 men and 7,377,000 women enrolled in college as undergraduates. In 1969 there were 4,008,000 men and 2,876,000 women undergraduate students enrolled in college. Between 1969 and 2000 the number of men undergraduates increased by 1,570,000 or by 39 percent. During this period the number of women undergraduates increased by 4,501,000 or by 157 percent. The number of women undergraduates surpassed the number of men in 1978. The share of college undergraduates that are men has declined from 58 percent in 1969 to 44 percent in 2000. (National Center for Education Statistics)
2. Between 1967 and 2000 the proportion of women aged 18 to 24 that were enrolled in college *doubled* from 19.2 to 38.4 percent. During this same period the proportion of men ages 18 to 24 that were enrolled in college *decreased* from 33.1 to 32.6 percent.
 - Between 1967 and 2000 the proportion of 18 to 24 year old women who were high school graduates increased from 76.6 to 84.1 percent, or by 7.5 percentage points. During this period the proportion of 18 to 24 year old men who were high school graduates increased from 74.2 to 79.6 percent, or by 5.4 percentage points.
 - Between 1967 and 2000 the proportion of 18 to 24 women high school graduates that were enrolled in college *increased* from 25.1 to 45.6 percent, and increase of 20.5 percentage points. For men the proportion of 18 to 24 year old high school graduates that were enrolled in college *decreased* from 44.7 to 40.9 percent, a decrease of 3.8 percentage points. (Census Bureau)

Indicators at College Graduation

The disparities in educational attainment are fully played out at the end of the education pipeline, at college graduation, where smaller differences at each stage in the education pipeline are fully magnified and become most apparent.

1. Between 1975 and 2001, the number of bachelor's degrees earned by men increased by 26,999 (from 504,841 to 531,840), or by 5 percent. During the same period the number of bachelor's degree earned by women increased by 294,239 (from 418,092 to 712,331), or by 70 percent. Of the total increase in bachelor's degrees awarded during this period (321,238), 8 percent was earned by males and 92 percent was earned by females. (National Center for Education Statistics)
2. In 1970 a majority of all bachelor's degrees were awarded to men in all 50 states. By 2001 a majority of bachelor's degrees were awarded to women in all 50 states. (National Center for Education Statistics)
3. In 2001 a majority of associate degrees are awarded to females in 49 of the 50 states (Arizona is the exception). At the master's degree level a majority are awarded to women in every state except for Utah. (National Center for Education Statistics)
4. A majority of the bachelor's degrees are now awarded to females in every racial/ethnic group

of the population: whites, blacks, Hispanics, Asians and American Indians. (National Center for Education Statistics)

5. A majority of the bachelor's degrees are awarded to women in both public and private higher education. The gender shift from male to female has been most pronounced in private colleges and universities. (National Center for Education Statistics)
6. The gender shift has been occurring almost without interruption since 1870. The single interruption is the 30 years between 1940 and 1970 beginning with World War II and followed by its aftermath. (National Center for Education Statistics)
7. Males represent a shrinking share (and females a growing share) of bachelor's degrees awarded in every major field of college study. The gains of females have been greatest in business, psychology, agriculture, biology/life sciences, communications, architecture and physical sciences. The gains by females have been least in mathematics, engineering, computer/information sciences. (National Center for Education Statistics)
8. In about another decade, a majority of first first-professional and then doctorate degrees will be awarded to women if the trends of the last four decades continue. This has already occurred in some fields (pharmacy, veterinary medicine) and in some states.

Education Pipeline Indicators

1. *Special education:* In K-12 education boys are more likely to be diagnosed with special education needs than girls. Among secondary students, 73 percent of those with learning disabilities and 76 percent of those who are emotionally disturbed are boys. A majority of all other disabilities (speech, mental retardation, visual impairment, etc.) are boys—greater than their share of the population. (U.S. Department of Education)
2. *Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder:* Boys are about two to three times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with ADHD. (internet)
3. *Enrollment below modal grade:* Boys are more likely than girls to be held back in school. In 2000 by age 15 to 17 years, 34.3 percent of boys were enrolled below modal grade for their age, compared to 25.8 percent of girls. (Census Bureau)
4. *High school dropouts:* In 2000 4.5 percent of boys 15 to 17 years dropped out of school, compared to 4.2 percent of girls. (Census Bureau)
5. *High school graduation:* Among 25 to 29 year olds, in 2000 86.7 percent of males and 89.4 percent of females have graduated from high school (or received a GED). Females surpassed males on this measure in 1984. (Census Bureau)
6. *College continuation for recent high school graduates:* In 2002 the rate for males was 62.1 percent compared to 68.4 percent for females. Females surpassed males on this measure in 1981. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
7. *Bachelor's degree completion:* Among 25 to 29 year olds the 2001 rate for males was 27.9 percent compared to 30.1 percent for females. Females surpassed males in 1991. (Census Bureau)

Social Indicators

1. *Suicide:* Among 15 to 24 year olds, suicide rates were 5.8 times higher for males than for females in 2000. In 1900 male rates were 1.3 times higher for males than those for females. Between 1970 and 2000 male suicide rates *increased* by 29 percent while female suicide rates *decreased* by 29 percent. (National Center for Health Statistics)
2. *Incarceration:* Since mid 1970s, incarceration rates have grown very rapidly. U.S. rate of 707 prisoners per 100,000 population is now highest in the world. In 1970 the U.S.

incarceration rate was 175 prisoners in jails and prisons per 100,000 population. This is a 90 percent male issue. (Bureau of Justice Statistics)

3. *Male labor force disengagement:* Since early 1950s adult males have been disengaging from labor force. This decline has been greatest for males 55 to 64 years old, since about 1970. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
4. *Male disengagement from families:* Since early 1950s fewer children are being raised in families with a father present. Decline has been from about 93 percent in early 1950s to 78 percent by 2000. Proportion of children in families with biological father present is about two-thirds. (Census Bureau)
5. *Male disengagement from civic role:* Male voting rates have declined sharply since mid-1960s. Between the 1964 and 2000 Presidential elections the male voting rate declined from 72 to 53 percent. The decline for men has been nearly twice the decline in female voting rates. Women now vote at higher rates than do men—reversal from 1960s. (Census Bureau)

Demography

1. *Live births:* Every year in the United States (for the last 40 years) for every 100 girl babies born in the U.S. there are 105 male babies born. (National Center for Health Statistics)
2. Males remain a majority of the population through the college-age years, up until about age 30. They are about 51 percent of the population between 18 and 24. (Census Bureau)
3. *Associate degrees:* The male share of 2-year college degrees has declined from 57 to 40 percent between 1966 and 2001. (National Center for Education Statistics)
4. *Bachelor's degrees:* The male share of 4-year college degrees has declined from 57 percent in 1970 to 43 percent by 2001. (National Center for Education Statistics)
5. *Master's degrees:* The male share of master's degrees has declined from 60 percent in 1970 to 41 percent by 2001. (National Center for Education Statistics)
6. *First professional degrees:* The male share has declined from 95 percent in 1970 to 54 percent by 2001. (National Center for Education Statistics)
7. *Doctorate degrees:* The male share has declined from 87 percent in 1970 to 55 percent by 2001. (National Center for Education Statistics)

International Indicators

Education data gathered in industrialized countries finds that in most countries women are well ahead of men in education.

1. Secondary graduation rates in 1999 are higher for women than men in 16 countries, and higher for men than women in five countries.
2. Secondary graduates entry to degree courses in 1999 for those who have graduated from high school are higher for women than men in 15 countries, higher for men than women in five countries, and equal in two others.
3. Entry rates of age-group into degree courses were higher for women than men in 13 countries and higher for men than women in four countries. (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)

Economic Value of College Education

College is a better economic investment for men than it is for women.

1. A bachelor's degree adds about \$1,266,000 to a male's lifetime income compared to the income of a male high school graduate. (Census Bureau)

2. A bachelor's degree adds about \$650,000 to a female's lifetime income compared to the income of a female high school graduate. (Census Bureau)

Changing World Affects Men and Women Differently

1. *Urbanization:* Since 1790, population has grown steadily less rural and more urban, from 5 percent urban in 1790 to 75 percent by 1990. (Census Bureau)
2. *Changing industrial employment:* Since the end of WWII, the proportion of all jobs that are in goods producing industries (75% male employees) has shrunk from about 45 percent to 20 percent. The proportion of jobs in private service industries has grown from about 45 percent to 64 percent. A majority of these jobs are held by women. Employment opportunities for men have been shrinking while opportunities for women have been expanding. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Is This an Issue for Women?

1. Women college students have raised this gender imbalance issue as a problem on college campuses. They are concerned about the social health of campus life when they are many fewer men than women on college campuses. (reported by admissions deans, college presidents)
2. In 2001 there were about 180,000 more bachelor's degrees awarded to women than to men. (National Center for Education Statistics) That means that at least 180,000 college educated women will not find college educated men to marry.
3. Most women have men in their lives, as fathers, brothers, husbands and/or sons. When the males in their lives are struggling, women are affected too.
4. Black women feel this gender imbalance more acutely than do other women of other racial/ethnic groups because it has been a problem in the black community far longer than in other population groups. In 2000 black women earned twice as many bachelor's degrees as did black men. Women in other racial/ethnic groups will face the gender imbalance that black women face today in another decade or two if historical trends continue.

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