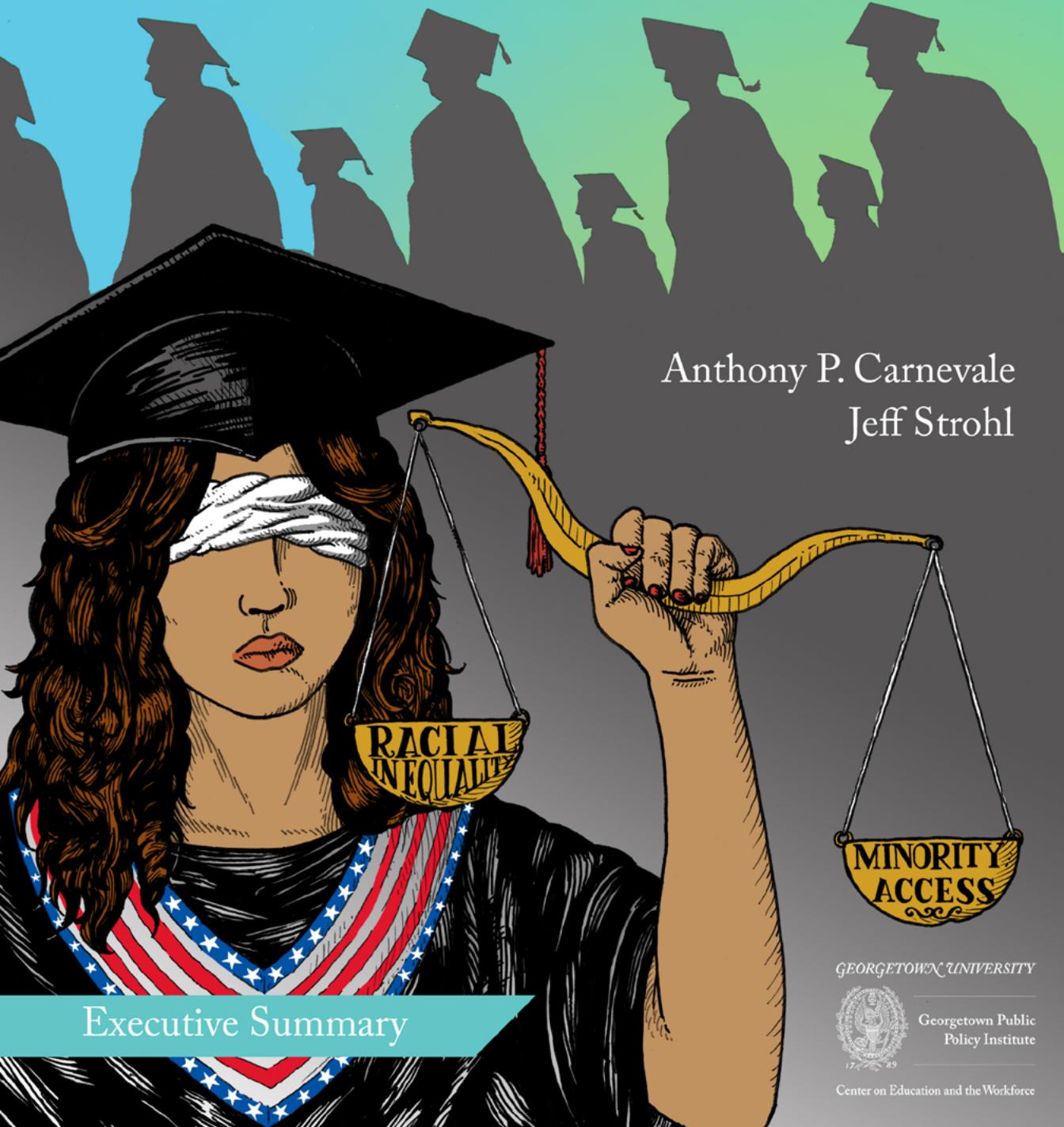


& SEPARATE UNEQUAL

How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational
Reproduction of White Racial Privilege



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Executive Summary

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



Georgetown Public
Policy Institute

Center on Education and the Workforce

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

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PART 1

The Racially Polarized Postsecondary Education System





The postsecondary system mimics the racial inequality it inherits from the K-12 education system, then magnifies and projects that inequality into the labor market and society at large.

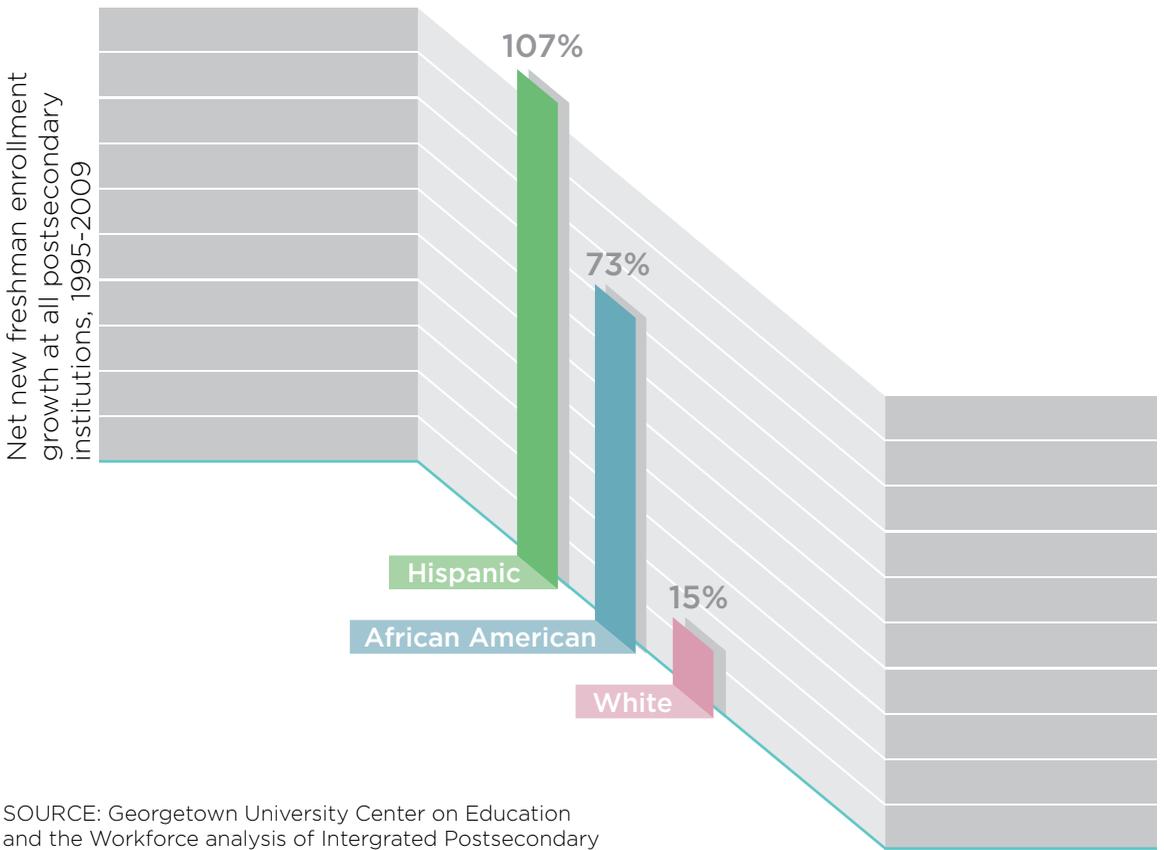
In theory, the education system is colorblind; but in fact, it is racially polarized and exacerbates the intergenerational reproduction of white racial privilege.



Minority access to postsecondary education over the past 15 years is a good news – bad news story.

The good news is that postsecondary access has increased, especially for African Americans and Hispanics (fig. 1).

Figure 1. Between 1995 and 2009, new freshman enrollments at postsecondary institutions grew by 107 percent for Hispanics, 73 percent for African Americans, and 15 percent for whites.



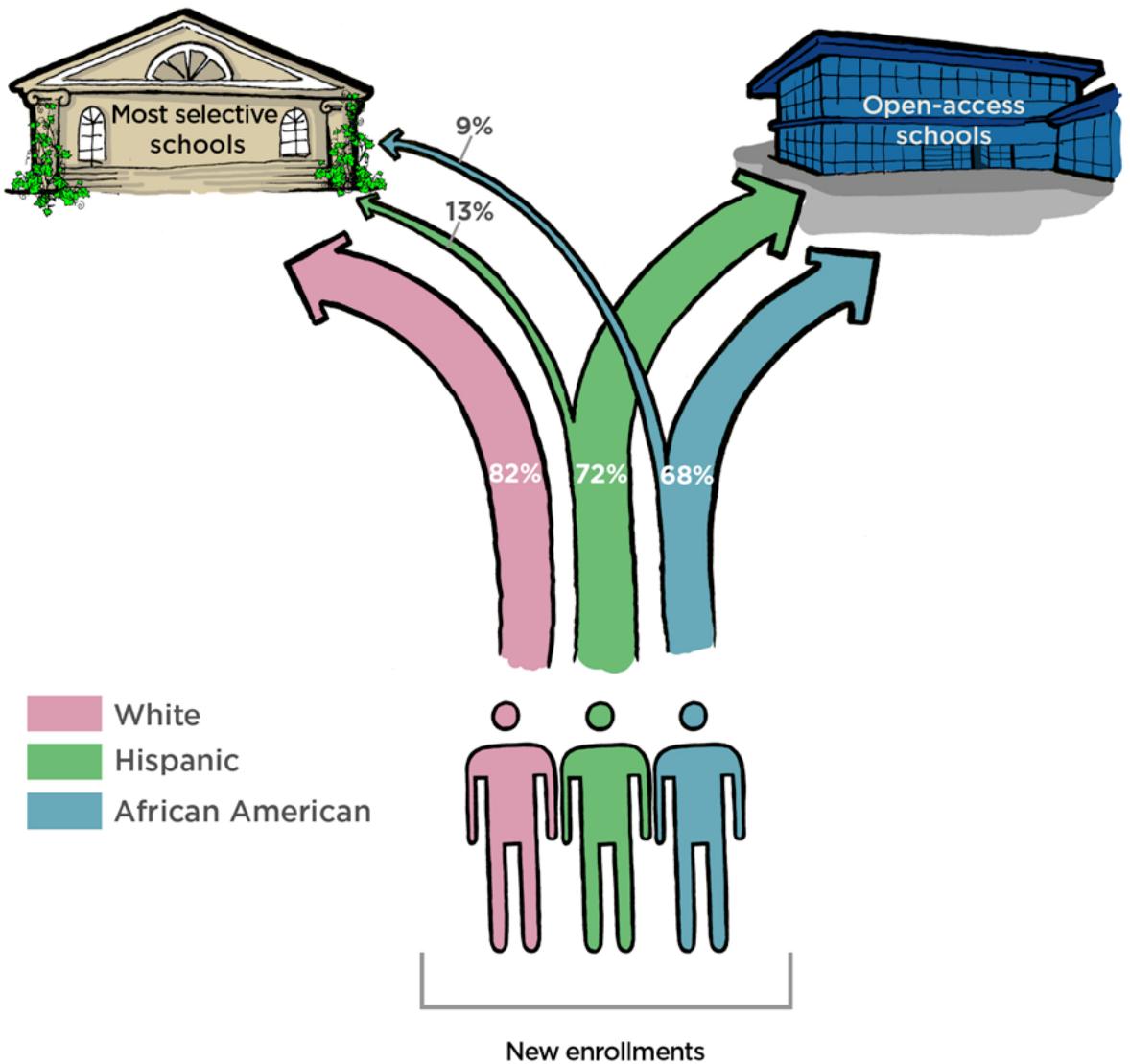
SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) data; various years



The bad news is that, despite increasing access, there are two separate postsecondary pathways: one for whites and another for Hispanics and African Americans.

Whites have captured most of the enrollment growth at the 468 most selective and well-funded four-year colleges, while African Americans and Hispanics have captured most of the enrollment growth at the increasingly overcrowded and under-resourced open-access two- and four-year colleges (fig.2).

Figure 2. Between 1995 and 2009, 82 percent of new white freshman enrollments were at the 468 most selective four-year colleges, compared to 13 percent for Hispanics and 9 percent for African Americans; 68 percent of new African-American freshman enrollments and 72 percent of new Hispanic freshman enrollments were at open-access two- and four-year colleges, compared to no growth for whites.

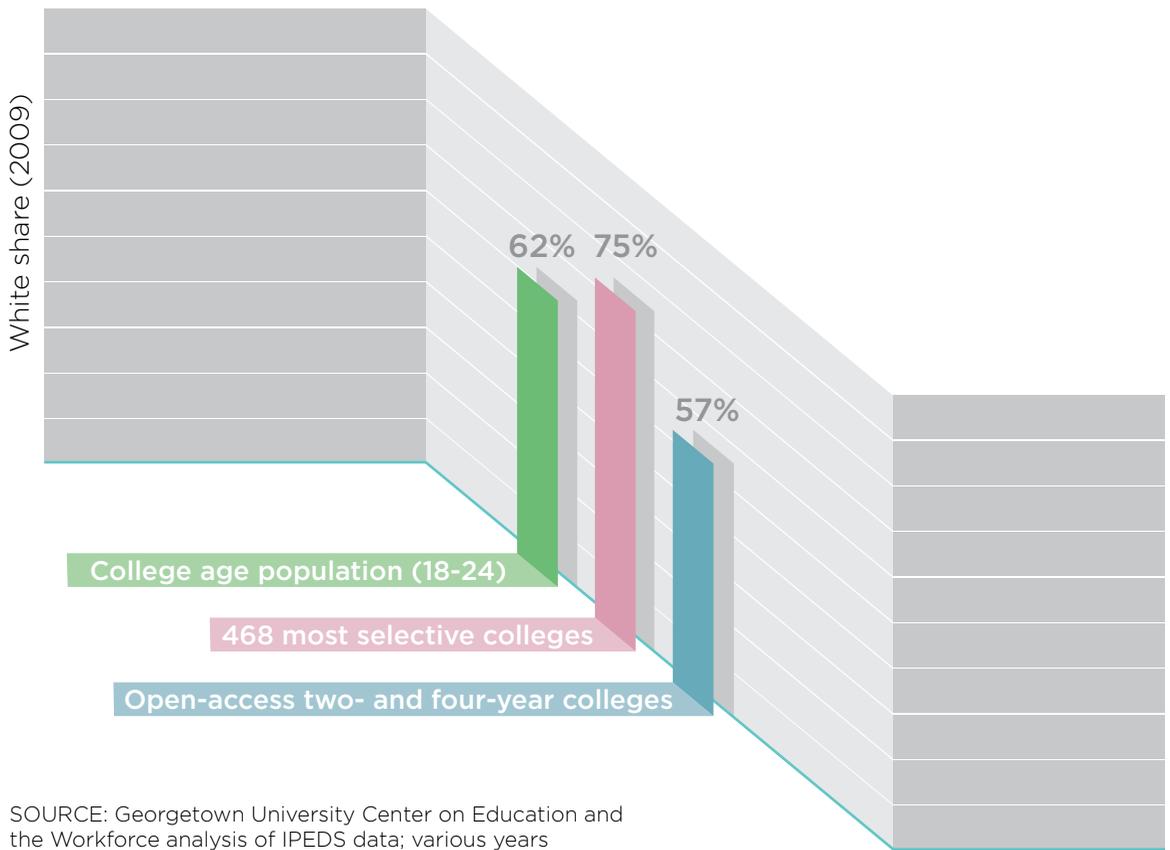


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of IPEDS data; various years



These racially polarized enrollment flows have led to an increasing overrepresentation of whites at the 468 most selective four-year colleges (fig. 3).

Figure 3. Whites represent 75 percent of students at the 468 most selective four-year colleges compared to 62 percent of the college-age population (18-24 years old) and only 57 percent of students at the open-access two- and four-year colleges.

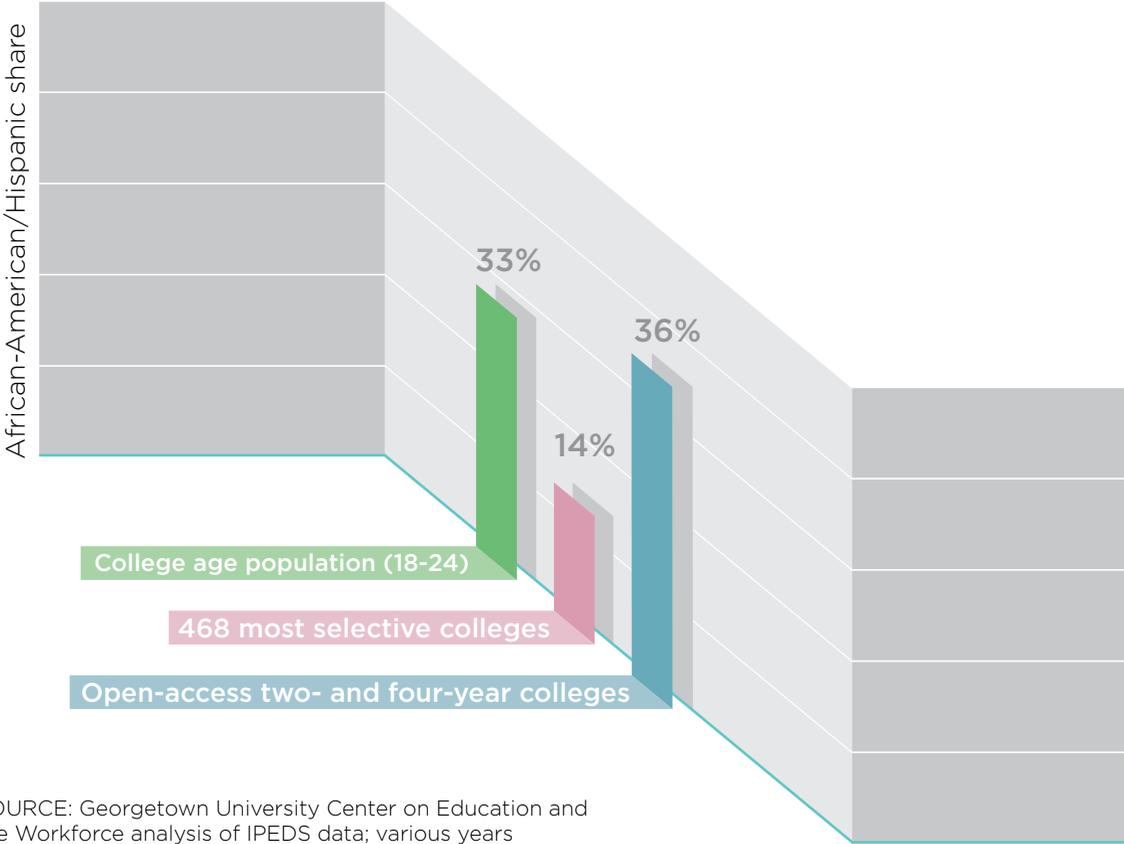


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of IPEDS data; various years



At the same time, African Americans and Hispanics are increasingly underrepresented at the most selective 468 four-year colleges (fig. 4).

Figure 4. African-American and Hispanic students represent 36 percent of students at open-access two- and four-year colleges compared to 33 percent of the college-age population (18-24 years old) and only 14 percent of students at the 468 most selective four-year colleges.

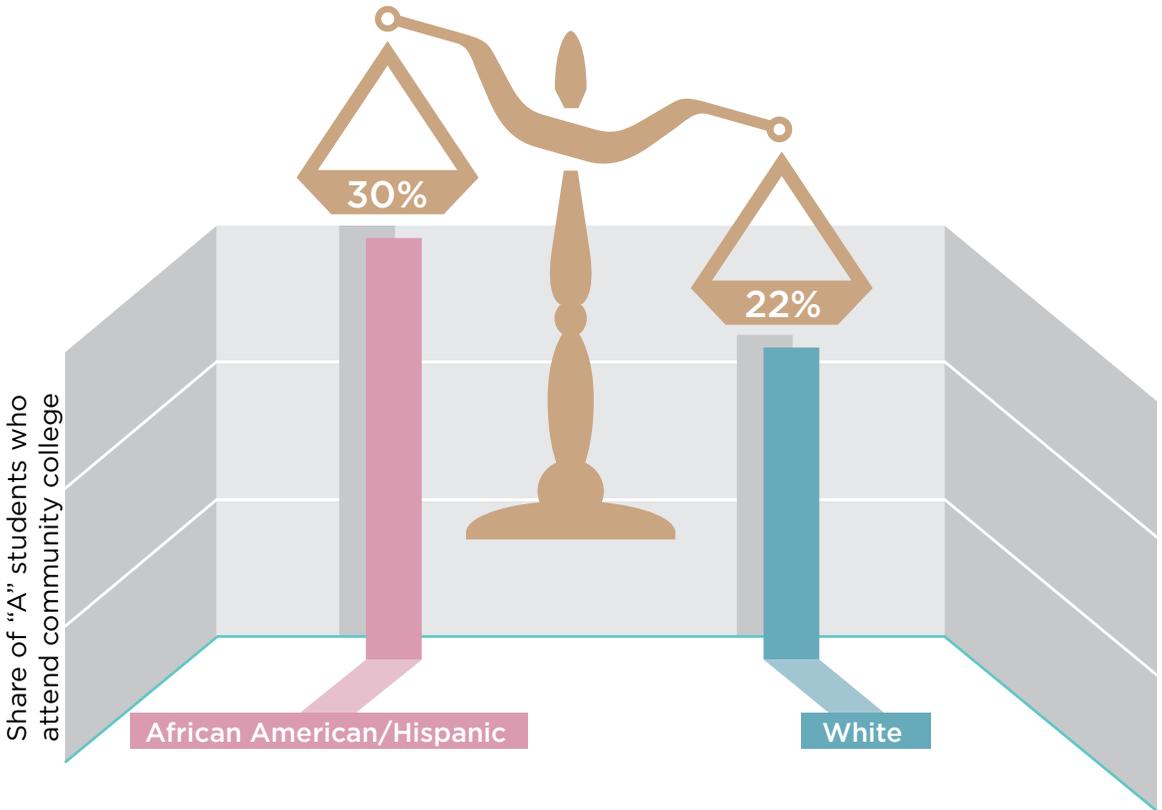


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of IPEDS data; various years



These racially polarized separate pathways exist, even among highly qualified students: Among “A” students, African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to enroll in community colleges than similarly qualified white students (fig. 5).

Figure 5. Among students who had an A average in high school, 30 percent of African-American and Hispanic students attend community college, compared to 22 percent of white students.



SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce using PowerStats from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Studies (NPSAS:08)

PART 2

These Separate Pathways
Lead to Unequal
Educational and
Economic Outcomes





The 468 most selective four-year colleges, where whites are disproportionately enrolled, have:

- Greater financial resources (fig. 6)
- Higher completion rates (fig. 7)
- Higher rates of graduate school enrollment and advanced degree attainment (fig. 8)
- Higher future earnings (fig. 9)

Figure 6. Instructional spending. The 82 most selective colleges spend almost five times as much on instruction as open-access two- and four-year colleges.

SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of Desrochers, Donna M. and Jane V. Wellman (2011), "Trends in College Spending, 1999-2009," Delta Cost Project

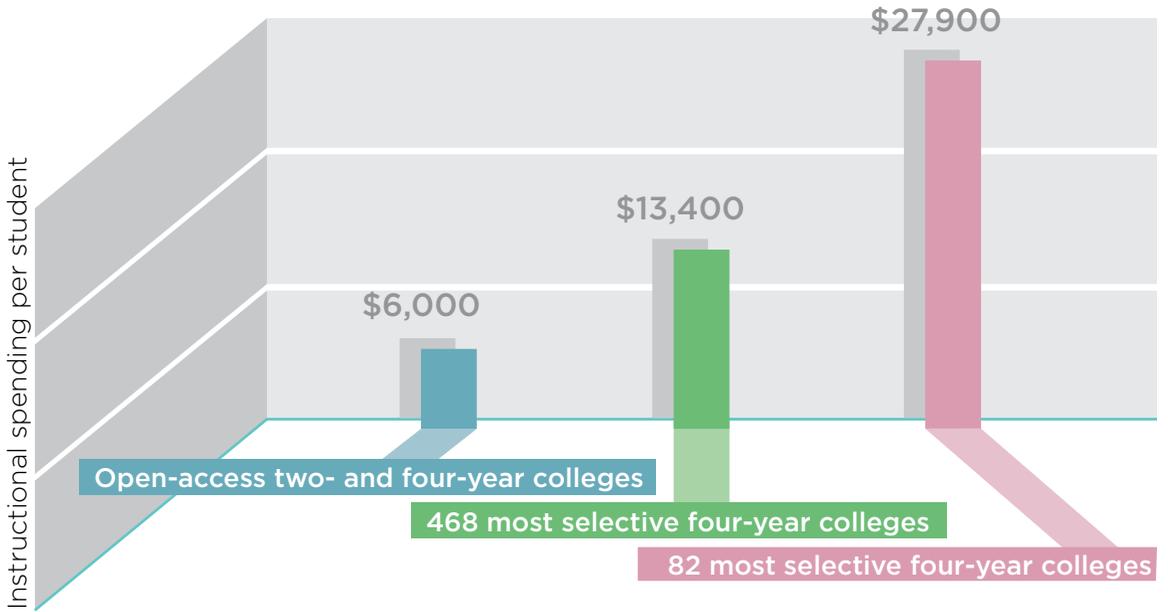


Figure 7. Completion. The 468 most selective colleges' completion rate is 82 percent, compared to 49 percent for open-access two- and four-year colleges.

SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES – Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files, various years

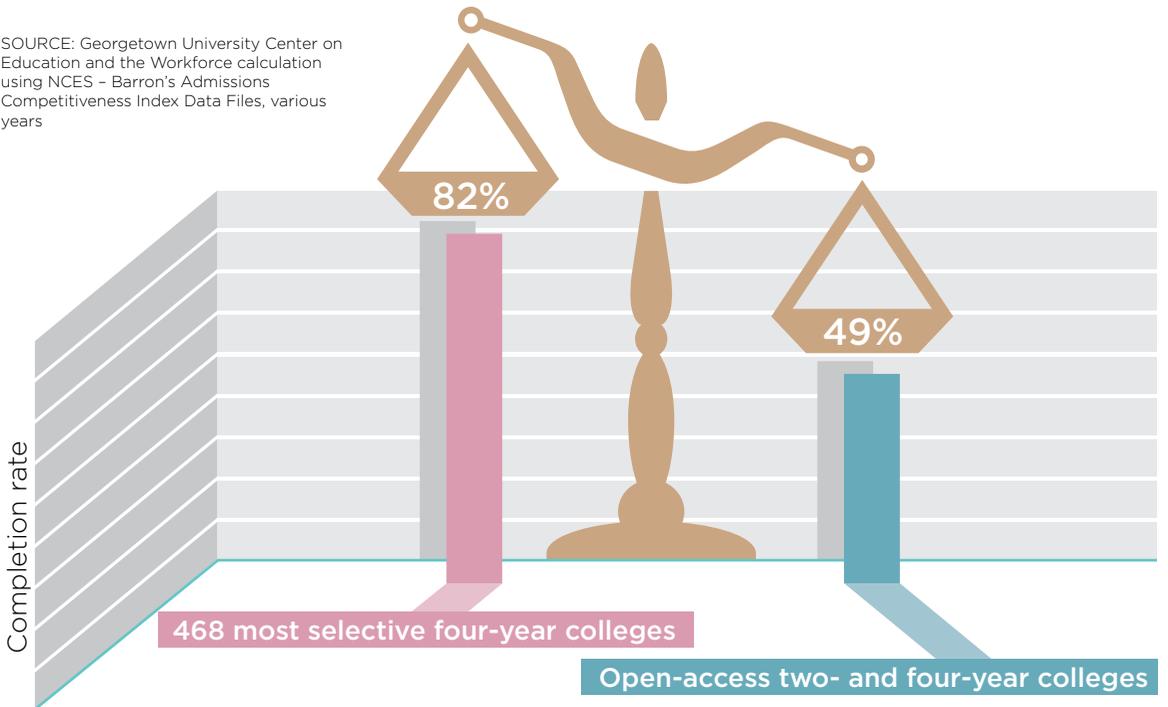


Figure 8. Graduate degree attainment. Students who graduate from the 468 most selective colleges are more likely to earn graduate degrees.

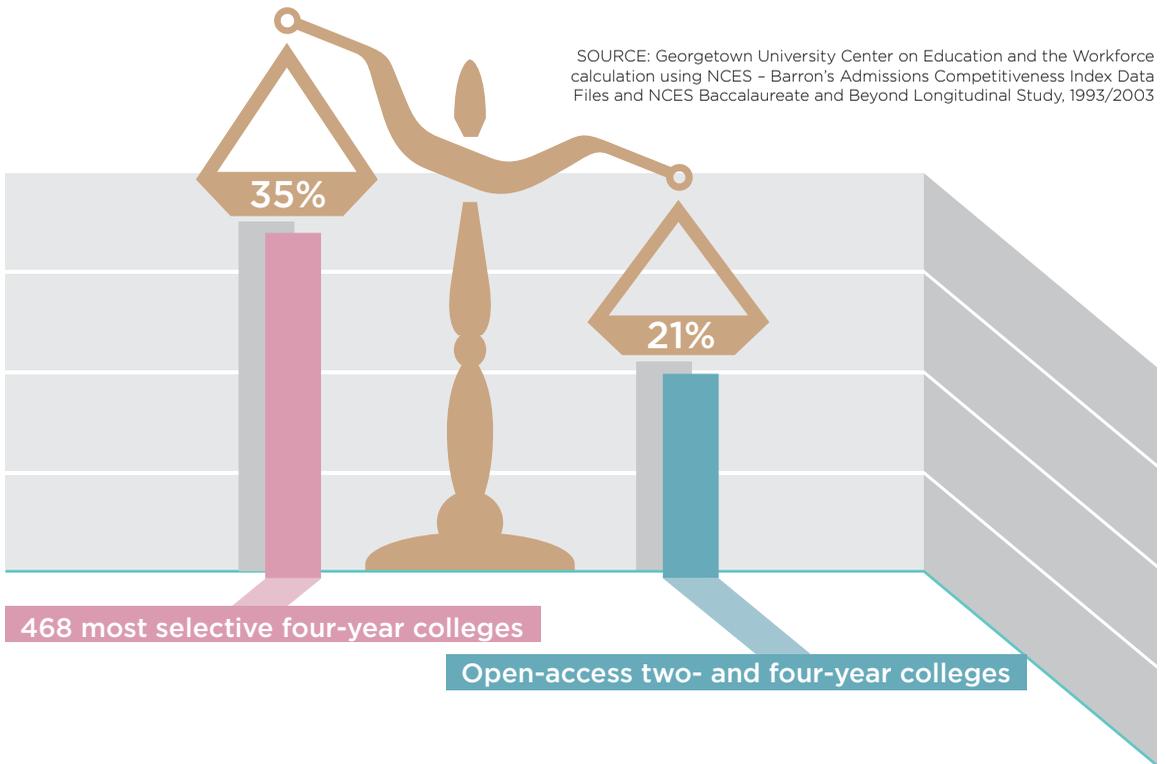
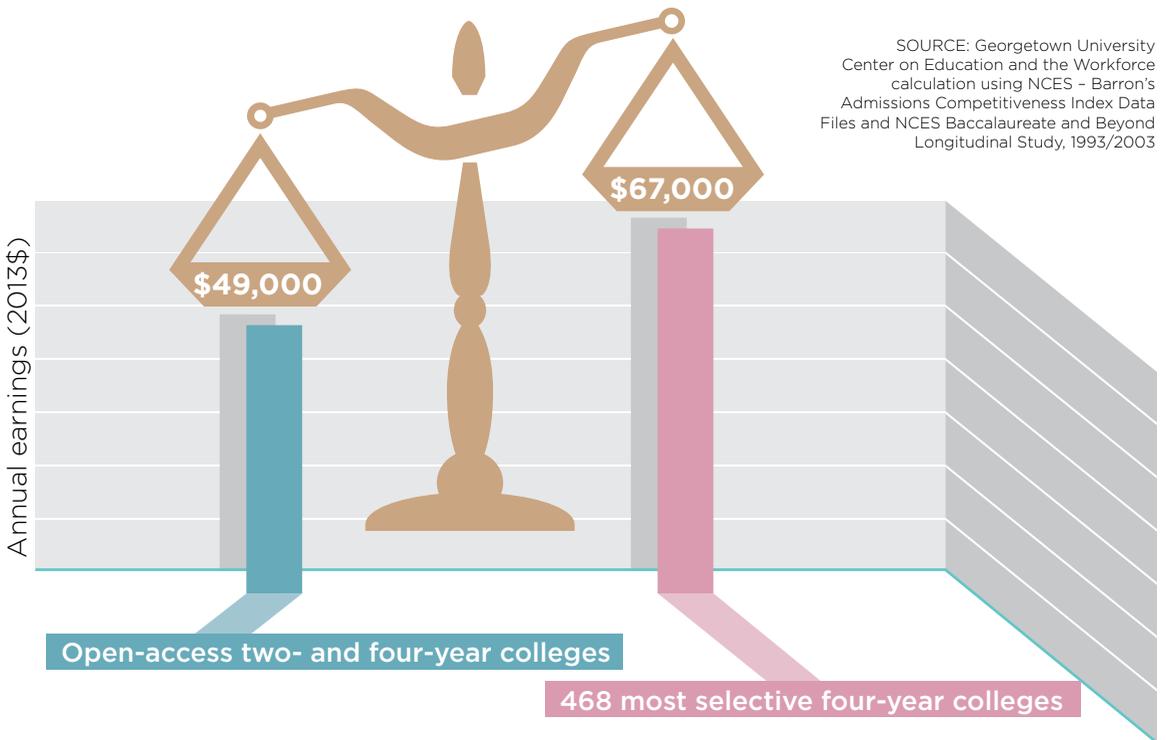


Figure 9. Earnings. Graduates from the 468 most selective colleges earn \$67,000 annually 10 years after graduating, compared to \$49,000 annually for graduates of the open-access two- and four-year colleges.



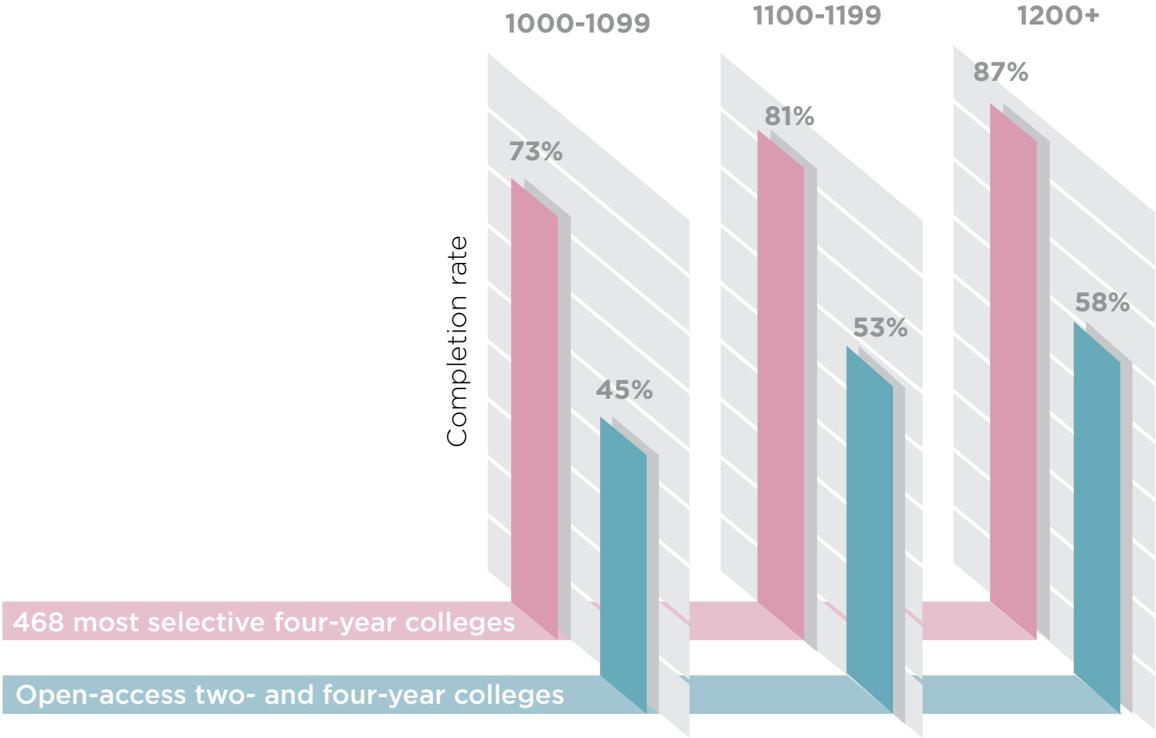


It's not all about college readiness:

Differences in academic preparation do not fully explain why completion rates are higher at the most selective four-year colleges.

Even among equally qualified students, the 468 most selective four-year colleges have substantially higher completion rates (fig. 10).

Figure 10. Among students who score 1100-1199 on the SAT/ACT, 81 percent of students at the 468 most selective colleges graduate, compared to 53 percent of students at the open-access two- and four-year colleges.

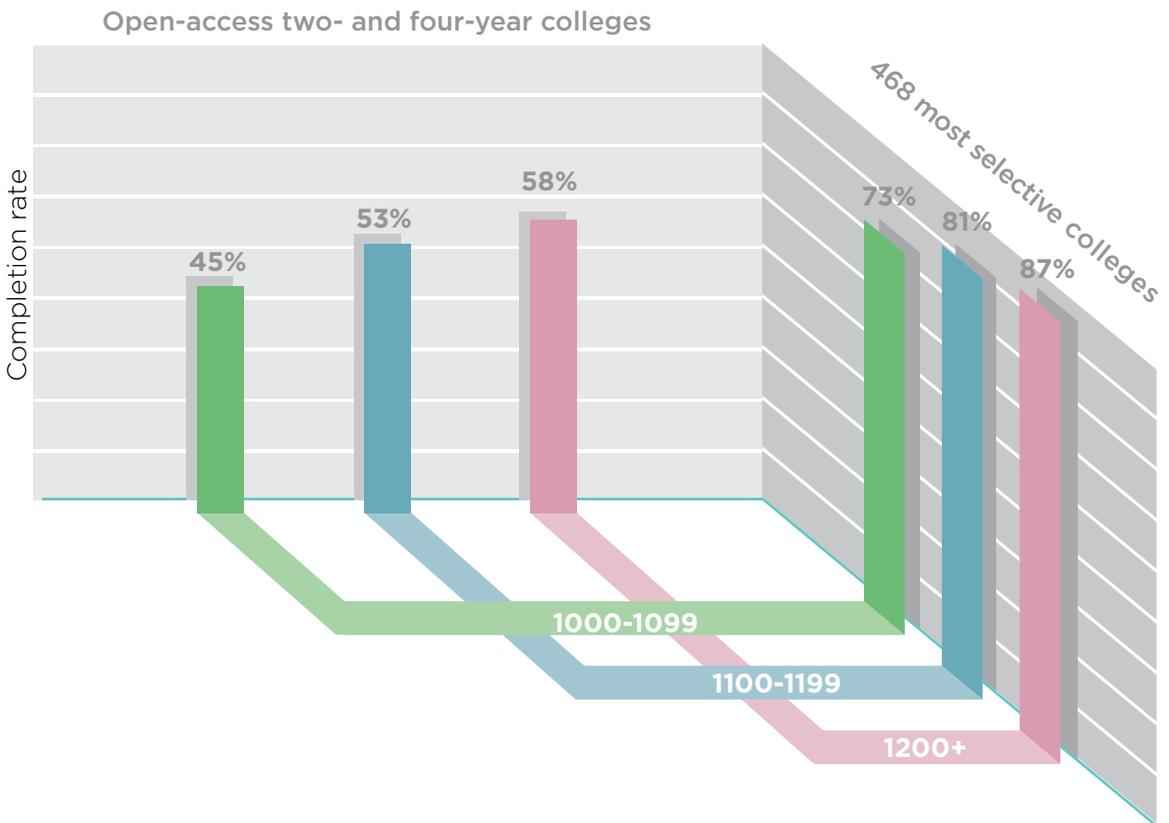


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES - Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files and data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), 1988, 2000



In fact, students with low test scores at the 468 most selective colleges graduate at higher rates than students with high test scores at open-access two- and four-year colleges (fig. 11).

Figure 11. Fifty-eight percent of students who score above 1200 on the SAT/ACT and attend an open-access two- or four-year college graduate, compared to 73 percent of students who score between 1000-1099 and attend one of the 468 most selective four-year colleges.



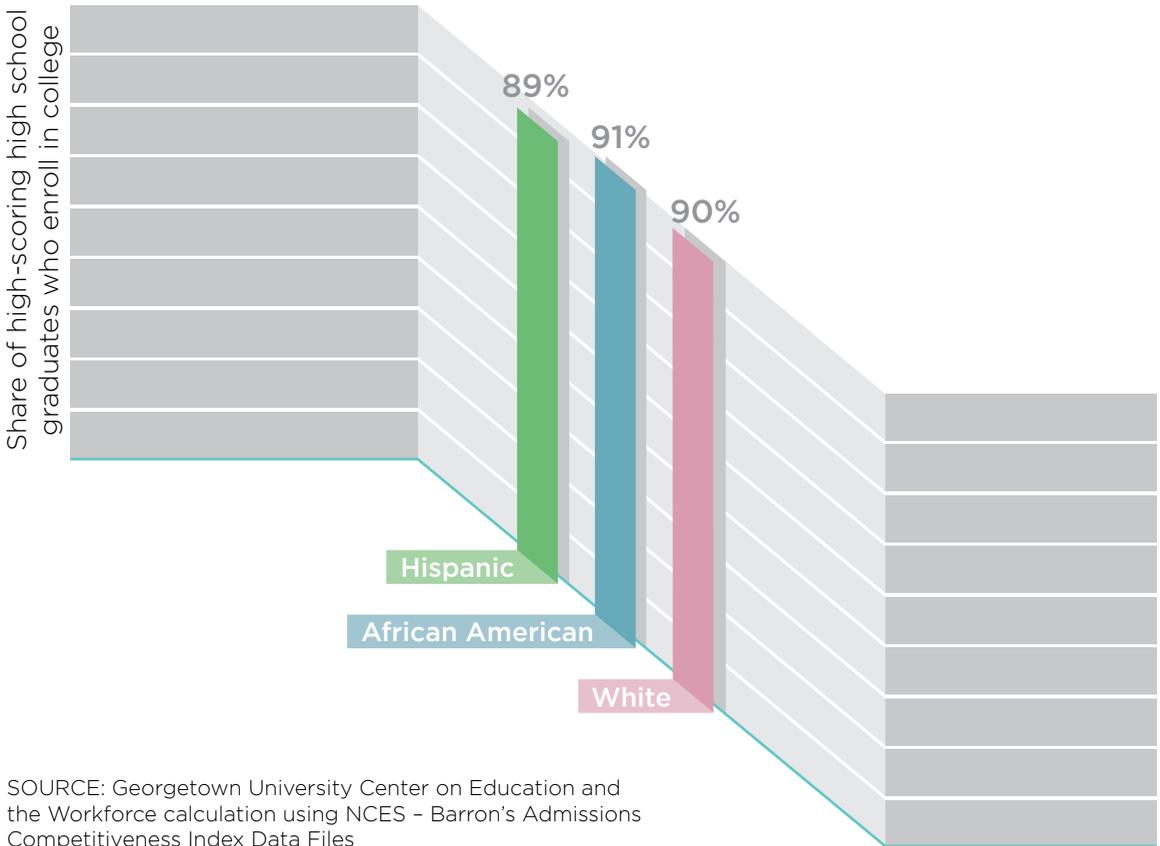
SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES - Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files and data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), 1988, 2000



The polarized postsecondary system results in gross racial differences in attainment, even among high school graduates who score in the top half of the SAT/ACT (high-scoring students).

Among high-scoring students, African Americans and Hispanics enroll in college at similar rates compared to whites (fig. 12).

Figure 12. High-scoring students attend college at the same rate regardless of being white, Hispanic or African-American.

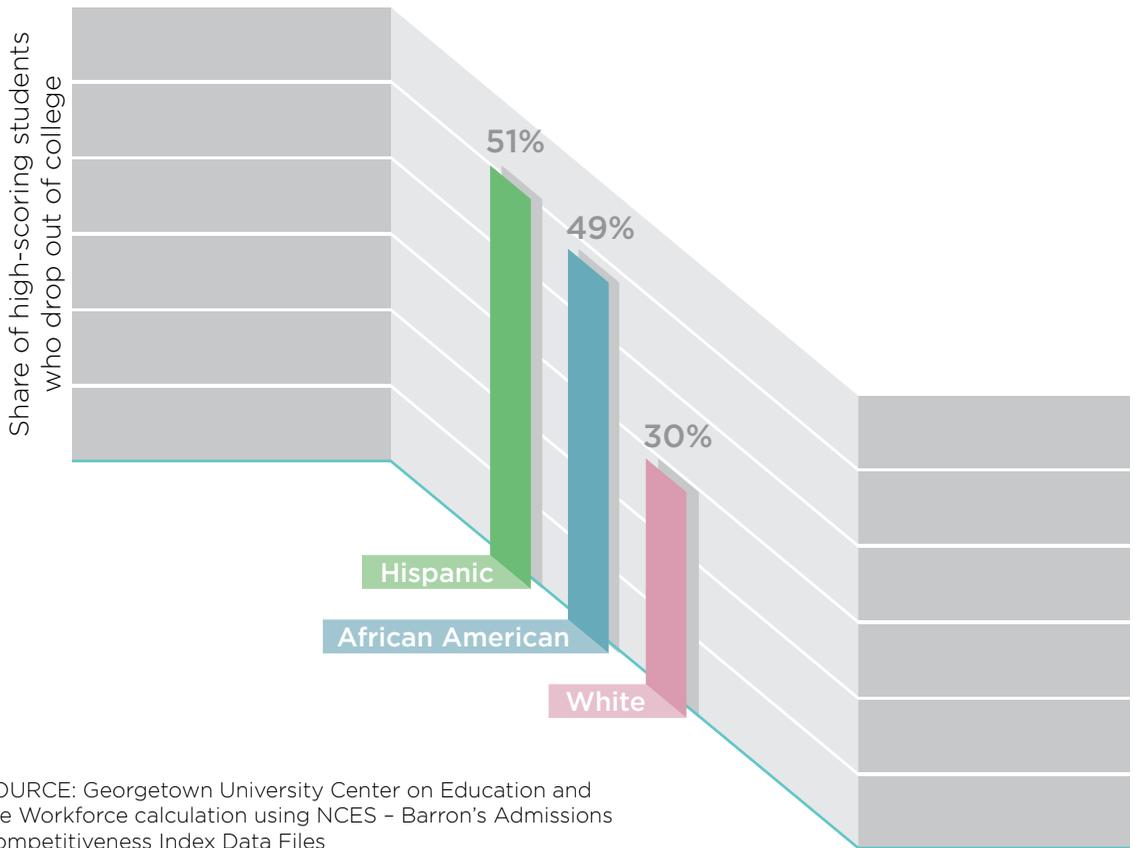


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES - Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files



However, high-scoring African Americans and Hispanics are far more likely to drop out of college before completing a credential (fig. 13).

Figure 13. Among high-scoring students who attended college, 51 percent of Hispanics and 49 percent of African Americans drop out of college before completing a credential, compared to only 30 percent of whites.

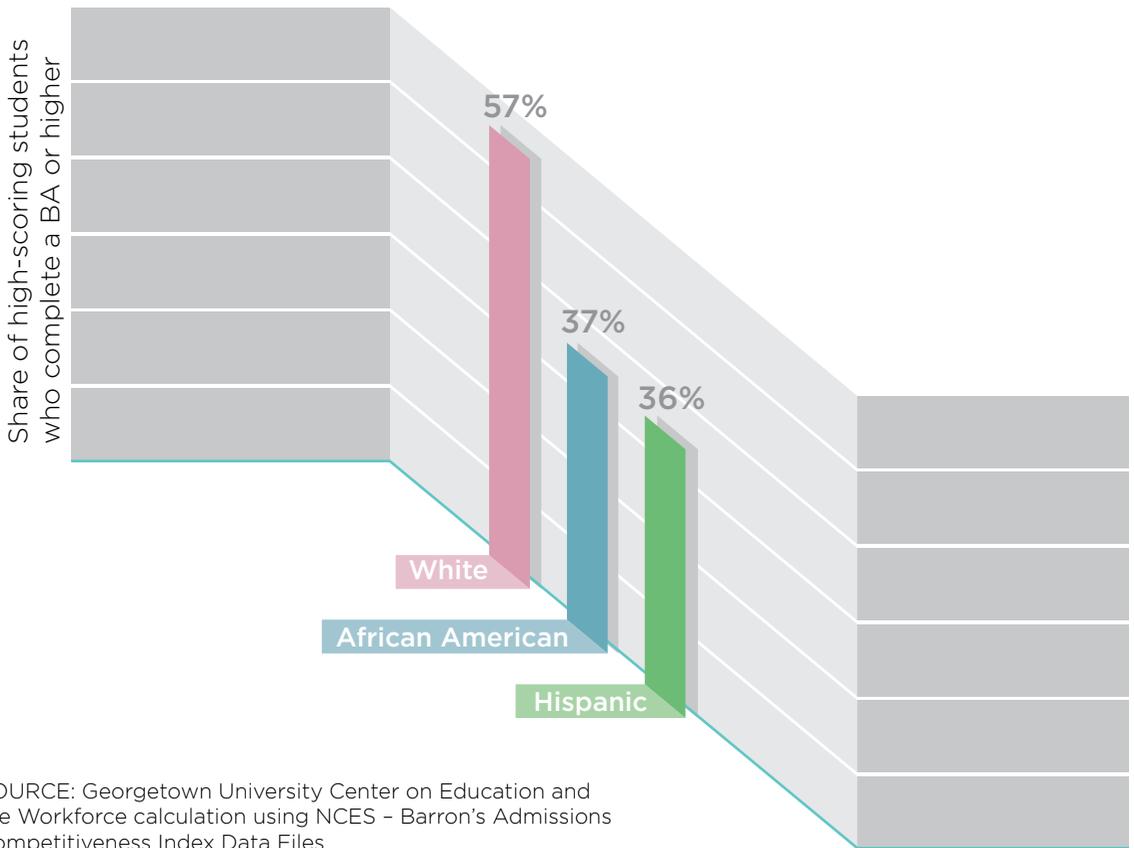


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES - Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files



Among high-scoring students who attended college, whites are far more likely to complete a BA or higher compared to African Americans or Hispanics (fig. 14).

Figure 14. Among high-scoring students who attended college, only 36 percent of Hispanics and 37 percent of African Americans complete a BA or higher, compared to 57 percent of white students.



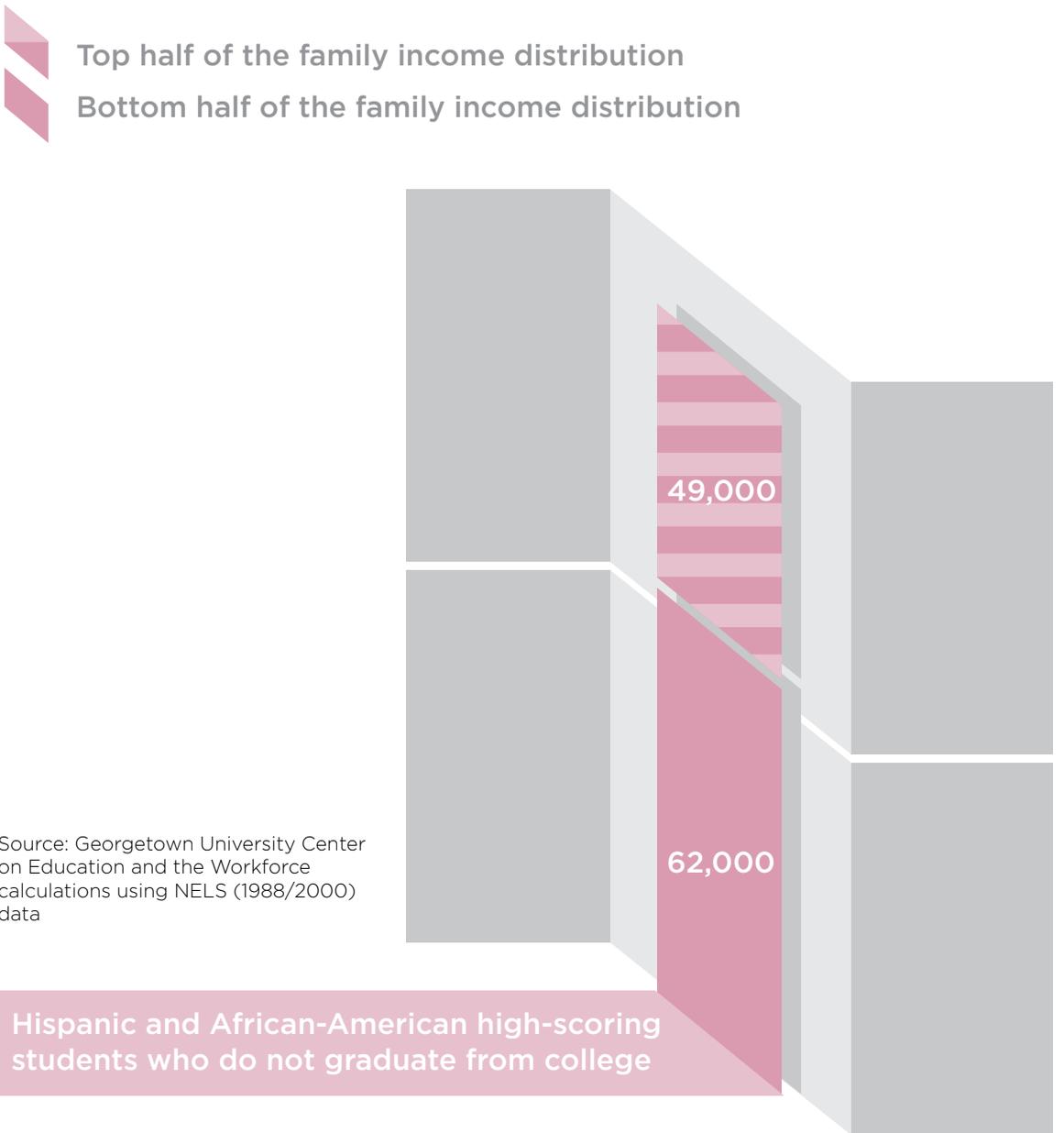
SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES - Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files



Each year, there are **111,000** high-scoring African-American and Hispanic students who either do not attend college or don't graduate.

About **62,000** of these students come from the bottom half of the family income distribution (fig. 15).

Figure 15. There are 111,000 African Americans and Hispanics who graduate from the top half of the nation’s high schools but do not graduate from college; 62,000 of them come from the bottom half of the family income distribution.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculations using NELS (1988/2000) data

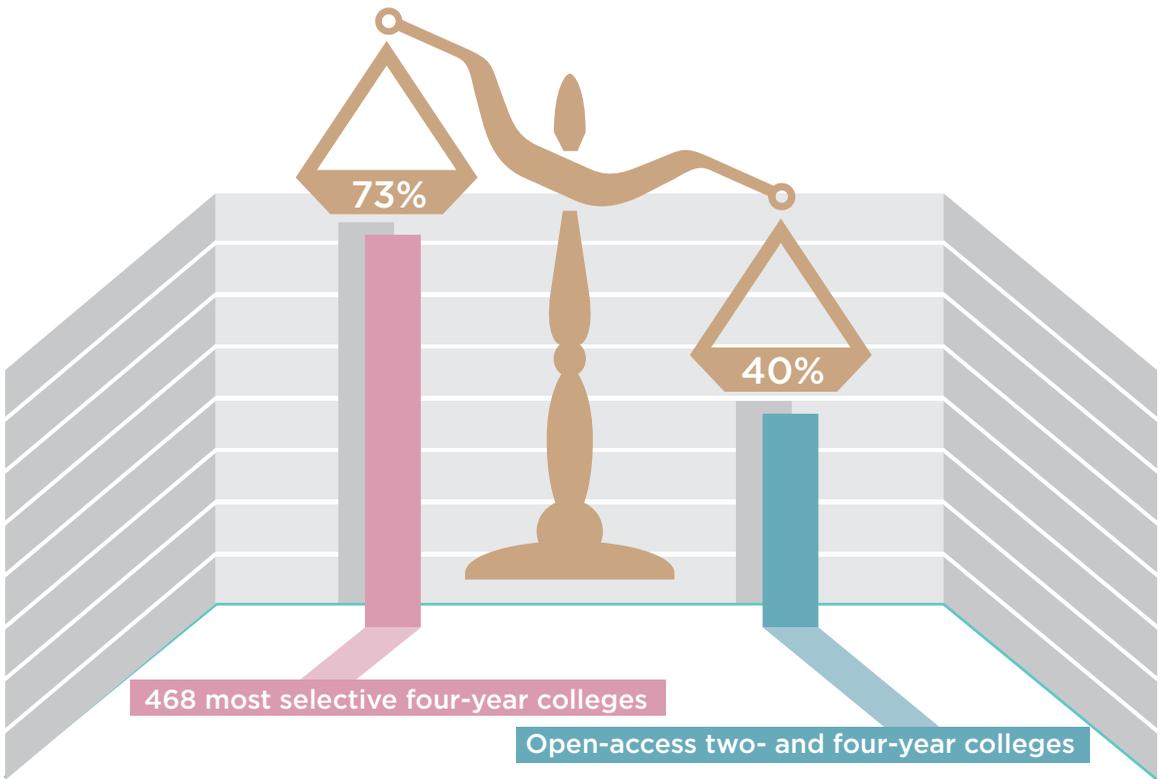


There are *enormous benefits* for high-scoring Hispanics and African Americans who go to one of the 468 most selective colleges:



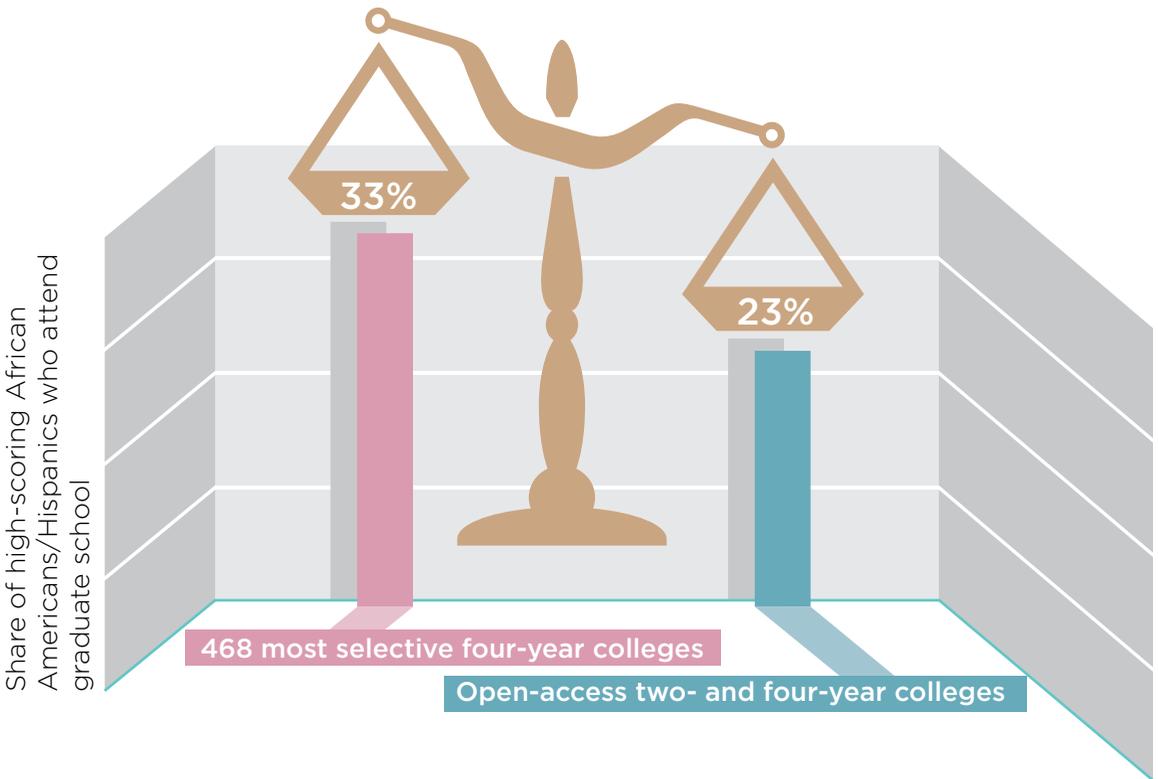
- They are nearly twice as likely to graduate as those who attend the open-access two- and four-year colleges (fig. 16).
- They have a greater chance of going on to graduate school (fig. 17).

Figure 16. Among high-scoring Hispanics and African Americans, 73 percent of those who attend the 468 most selective four-year colleges complete a degree, compared to 40 percent of those who attend the open-access two- and four-year colleges.



SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES – Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files

Figure 17. Among high-scoring Hispanic and African-American who graduate from college, 33 percent of those who attend the 468 most selective four-year colleges go on to graduate school, compared to 23 percent of those who attend open-access two- and four-year colleges.



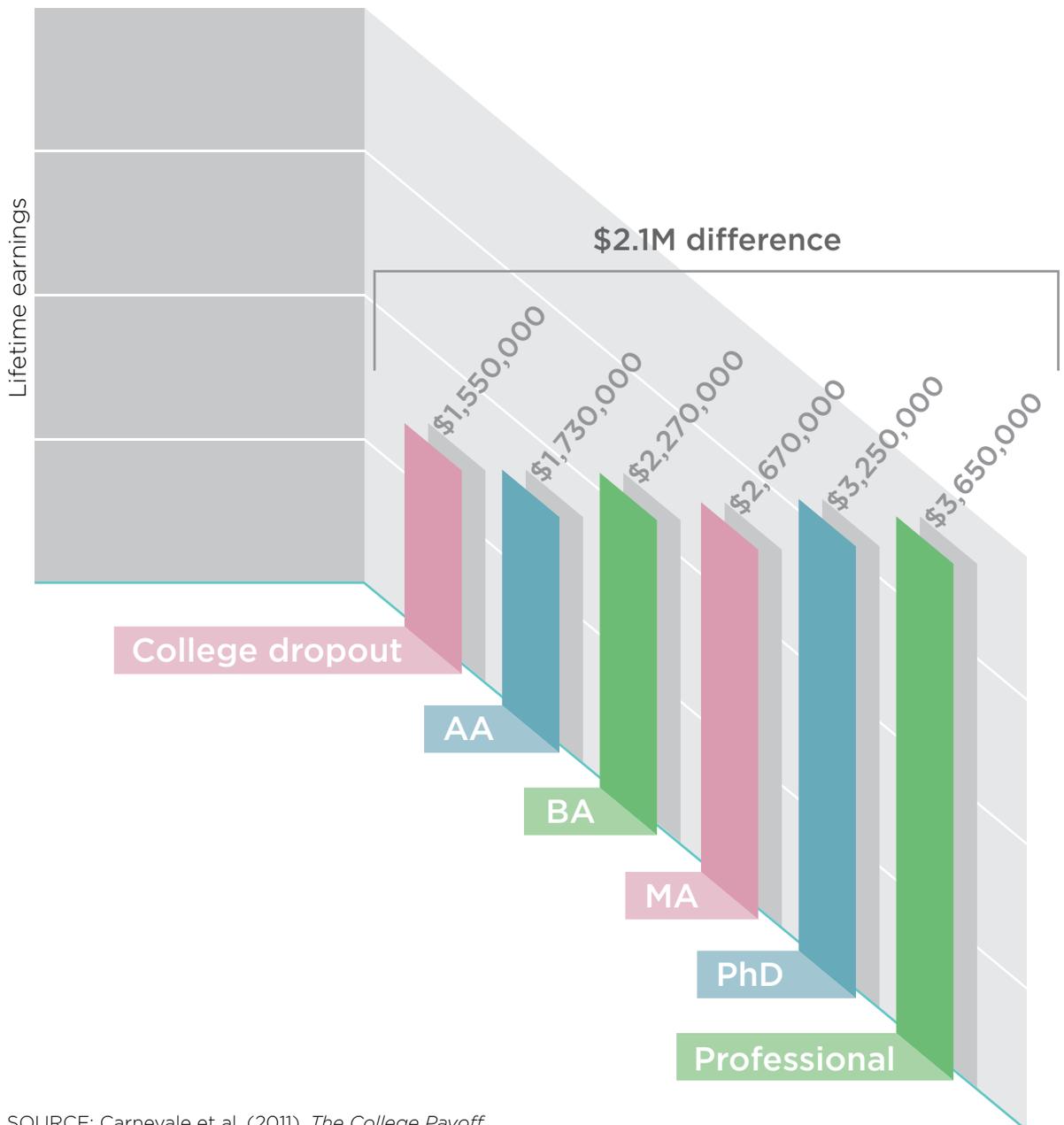
SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES - Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files



The separate and unequal postsecondary system has enormous implications for how workers fare in the labor market:

Workers with professional degrees, 76 percent of whom are white, *earn \$2.1 million more* over a lifetime than workers who dropped out of college (fig. 18).

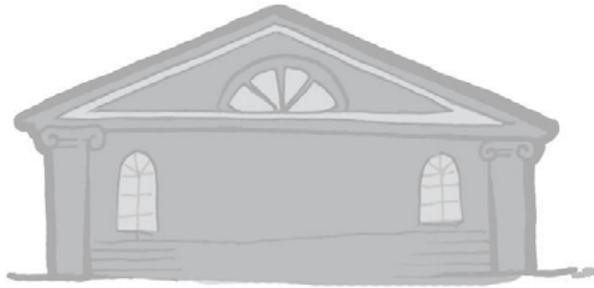
Figure 18. Workers with advanced degrees earn up to \$2.1 million more than college dropouts over a lifetime.



SOURCE: Carnevale et al. (2011), *The College Payoff*.

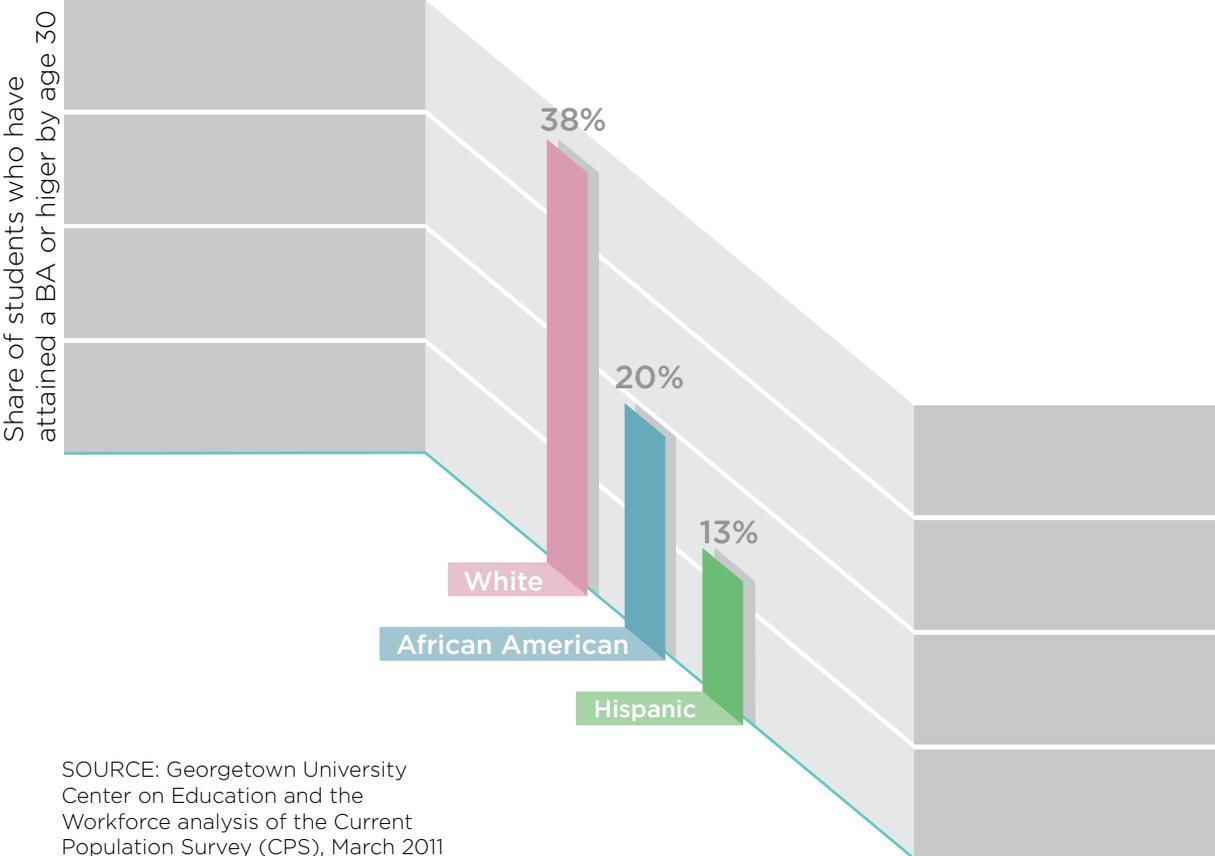
PART 3

The Intergenerational Reproduction of White Racial Privilege



Racial inequality in the educational system, paired with low social and economic mobility in the United States, produces enormous differences in educational outcomes: Whites are twice as likely as African Americans and three times as likely as Hispanics to complete a BA or higher (fig. 19).

Figure 19. By age 30, 38 percent of whites have earned a BA or higher, compared to 20 percent of African Americans and 13 percent of Hispanics.

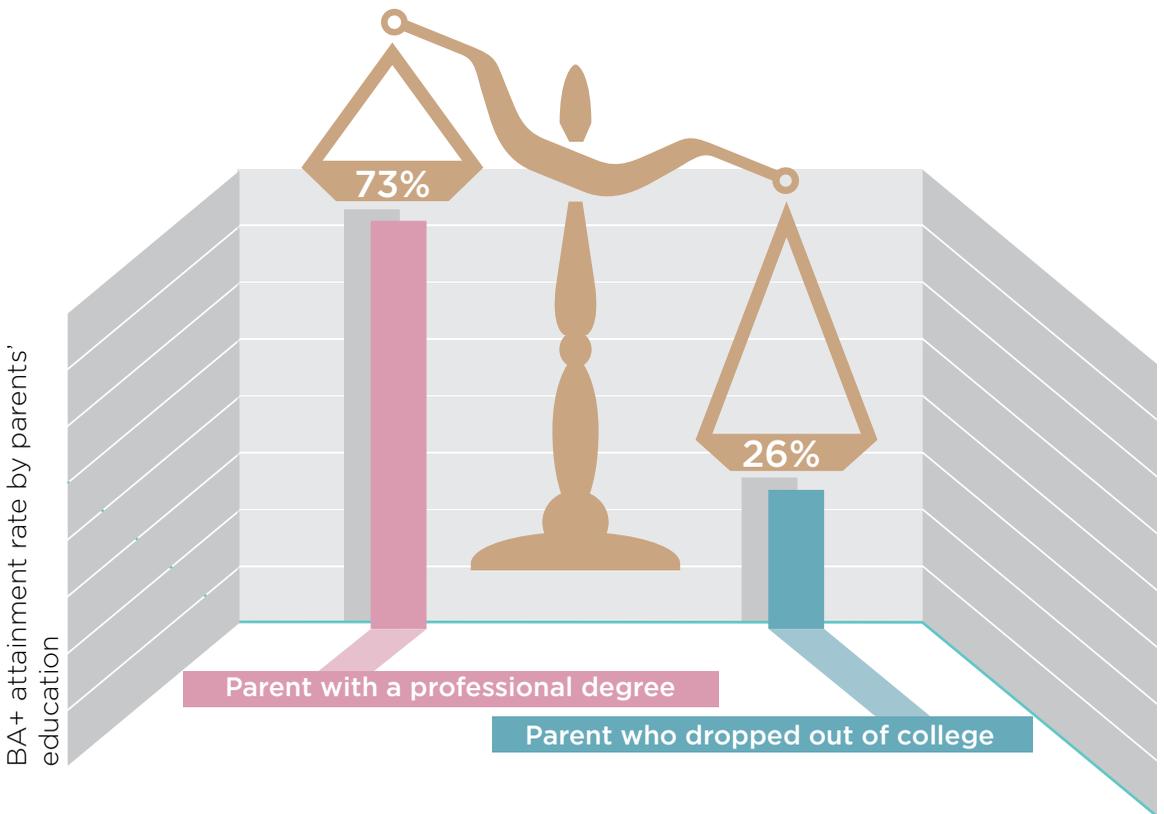


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of the Current Population Survey (CPS), March 2011



In the United States, parents' education determines the educational attainment of their children (fig. 20).

Figure 20. Seventy-three percent of people whose parents' highest education is a professional degree earn a BA, compared to 26 percent of people whose parent(s) dropped out of college.

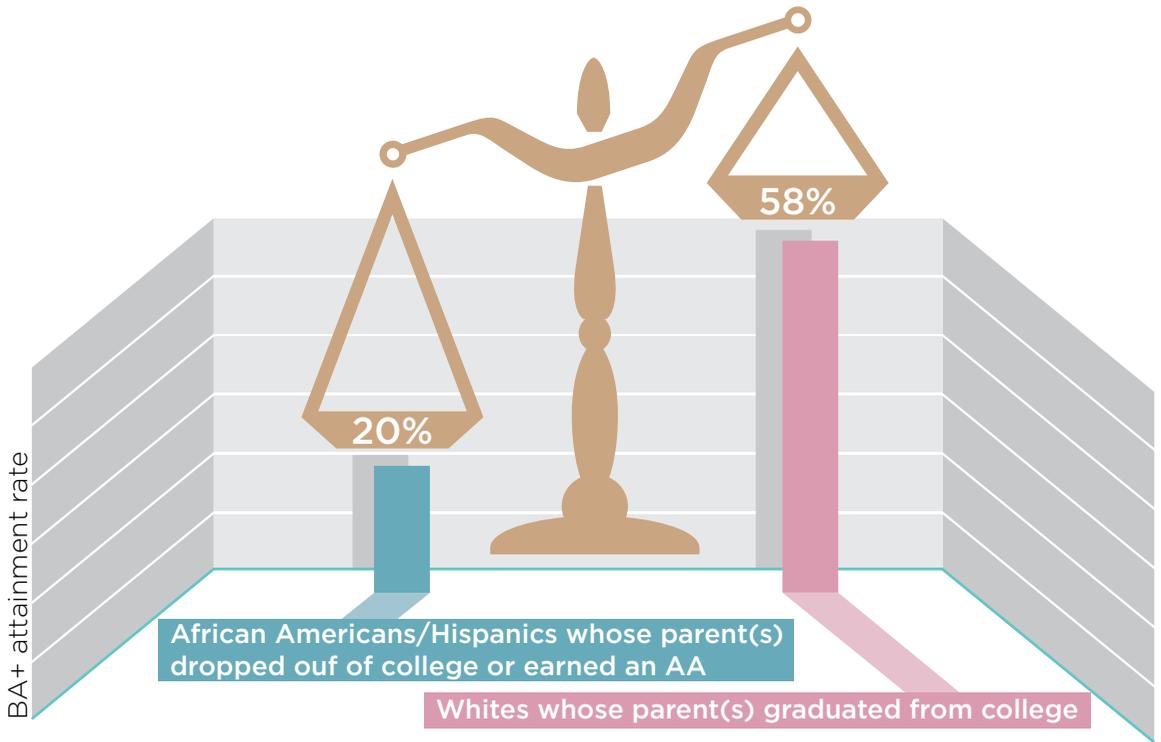


SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculations using Table 341 of Digest of Education Statistics 2011



Whites with college-educated parents are three times as likely to earn a BA or higher than African Americans and Hispanics with a parent(s) who dropped out of college (fig. 21).

Figure 21. Fifty-eight percent of the children of white college graduates earn a BA or higher, compared to just 20 percent of the children of African American/Hispanic college dropouts.



SOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce calculation using NCES - Barron's Admissions Competitiveness Index Data Files

Separate and Unequal: How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational Reproduction of White Racial Privilege comprises of a full report, and an executive summary.

Both can be accessed at
cew.georgetown.edu/separateandunequal

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