



Education by the Numbers

Donald Snead^a

^aMiddle Tennessee State University

Donald Snead (B.S. in Natural Science, M.A. Teaching in Curriculum & Instruction, Ed.D. Curriculum & Instruction in Science Education) is the Department Chair and Professor in the Educational Leadership Department at Middle Tennessee State University. Committed to a social constructivist philosophy, he teaches courses in curriculum, leadership, and research methods. Dr. Snead is an inductee into the Kentucky Distinguished Educators Cadre. His research interests focus on improving learning for all students.

Evidence shows that the correlation between educational attainment and employment is strongly positive. Educational attainment at or above high school completion significantly improves one's employment opportunities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023). Data indicates that postsecondary students with an earned postsecondary degree median earnings are higher compared to non-degreed postsecondary students (NCES, 2022).

Putnam (1981) defined a postsecondary student as a person who has completed or terminated their secondary education and for whom instruction is provided in postsecondary education. Postsecondary institutions may be grouped as universities or colleges offering programs leading to the bachelor or higher degree and/or first professional degree. Postsecondary also includes 2-year community/junior colleges and others leading to diplomas or certification.

Table 1

Postsecondary undergraduate enrollment in a degree-granting institution

Characteristics	N
Total Number of Students	15.5 million
Enrolled in 4-year institutions	10.8 million (70%)
Enrolled Full time	7.9 million (73%)
Enrolled Part time	2.9 million (27%)

Enrolled in 2-year institutions	4.7 million (30%)
Enrolled Full time	1.6 million (35%)
Enrolled Part time	3.0 million (65%)

Table 2

The racial/ethnicity distribution of undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions

Characteristics	N
White	52%
Hispanic	22%
Black or African American	13%
Asian	7%
Two or more races	4%
Native American/Alaska Native	1%
Pacific Islander	1%

References

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved on November 22, 2023 from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cbc>.
- Putnam, John, F. (1981). Postsecondary student terminology: A handbook of terms and definitions for describing students in postsecondary education. National Center for Education Statistics; Eric Number: ED215656, page 3.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023). Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 25 years and over by educational attainment, seasonally adjusted. Retrieved on November 22, 2023, from <https://bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#education>